

Fulham Chronicle

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Council chiefs to take 10% 'pay' cut

BY GEOFF BAKER
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SENIOR Hammersmith and Fulham councillors are helping to enable the coming freeze on council tax by taking a hit in their own wallets – with a 10 per cent “pay” cut.

The voluntary cuts mean that council leader Stephen Cowan will lose more than £3,500 a year.

At the same time as doing their bit, councillors are to save an extra £600,000 by axing top posts among council staff.

Following the decision to freeze tax for residents as part of a radical new budget for 2016/17, the council – which was the only authority in London to cut council tax last year – has agreed that councillors should contribute to savings themselves.

“We have asked councillors to

play their part and have reduced allowances by 10 per cent, becoming the first administration to ever cut councillors’ pay,” said councillor Cowan.

All councillors are paid an allowance for serving on the authority. The basic allowance is currently £8,940. This will be frozen for the coming budget year – despite a recommendation by the Independent Remunerator that it should be increased to £10,703.

In addition, certain councillors receive a Special Responsibility Allowance for holding senior offices and it is here, among the top bosses on the council – including the leader, deputy leader and the chairs of all committees – where the 10 per cent cuts will come.

At present the special allowance rates are: the leader: £35,763, deputy leader: £29,796, other cabinet members: £23,838, chief whip: £23,838, deputy chief whip: £5,564, chairmen of

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■ **STAR STRUCK:** Dominic West fans are in for a treat at Fulham Broadway's Vue cinema when it offers the chance to see the star's latest stage show live. West, pictured with Janet McTeer, features in a lead role in the National Theatre's stylish and intimate production of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*. The show is part of Vue's January line-up as once again the cinema group beams fantastic live events direct from London's West End via satellite to their cinemas. SEE PAGE 3

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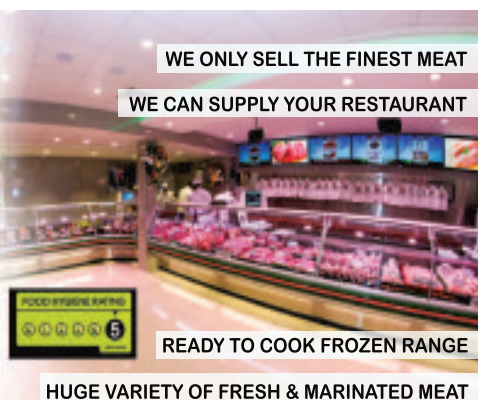


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Why Boris makes a tidy prophet

THE Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, is calling on Londoners to roll up their sleeves and join thousands of volunteers preparing to spruce up their local areas in honour of the Queen's 90th birthday.

Grants are also now available for the Mayor's 2016 Capital Clean-up scheme, where Londoners can apply for up to £1,500 plus special clean-up kits to brighten up and rejuvenate their local areas. This year, the mayor is also supporting a nationwide campaign, Clean for the Queen, in honour of Her Majesty's 90th birthday, by donating up to 100 clean-up kits containing litter pickers, gloves and rubbish bags for a special clean-up weekend in March.

Capital Clean-up, which has been led by the mayor for five years and supported by McDonald's, encourages Londoners do their bit and help transform neglected parts of the city. Last year the scheme saw a record 4,600 volunteers take part in events across London, collectively clocking up more than 17,000 hours of hard work cleaning up parks, streets, estates, residential areas and waterways.

Mr Johnson, said: "These small grants make a huge impact in helping

FROM
THE
MAYOR'S
OFFICE



local people transform neglected areas into much loved community spaces. I want to encourage everyone to sign up to Capital Clean-up and get together like-minded neighbours and friends to litter pick, plant, paint and tidy and really brighten local spaces. This year we have the extra incentive of making our city as beautiful as possible in honour of The Queen."

Clean for The Queen's special clean-up weekend on March 4, 5 and 6 is a grassroots community initiative which is supported by Keep Britain Tidy and

a host of major businesses, charities, local authorities and schools, with the aim of attracting one million volunteers. People can also sign up to take part in the Clean for the Queen event through Team London's website.

Clean for The Queen campaign director Adrian Evans said: "The mayor's commitment to our campaign is brilliant. London is the most beautiful city in the world and we want it to look its very best for the people who live here and for the millions of visitors who flock to the capital every year. This is a community inspired, grass-roots mass action event – one that will become a recurring annual initiative. We feel that marking the Queen's 90th birthday with the inaugural clean-up is a wonderful way to kick-start it to life.

"We want to show that millions of people in the country care passionately about the litter affecting the nation and are prepared to get out and do something about it. Everyone in this country will reap the benefits."

It will be easier than ever to take part in the mayor's Capital Clean-up thanks to Team London's free speed volunteering app, which was launched by the mayor earlier this month. The first of

its kind in the country, the app will display clean-up events across the capital allowing Londoners to find volunteering opportunities near them. An extra 1,000 volunteers gave up their time to participate in a Capital Clean-up event in 2015 compared to the previous year, and the number of hours contributed by volunteers doubled.

Head of sustainability at McDonald's UK, Howard Gray said: "We understand the importance of having a clean and sustainable local environment. Every year, our franchisees and restaurants organise hundreds of community projects across the country and dozens across Greater London. We are proud to support both Capital Clean-up and enable thousands of Londoners volunteer to help make their city a cleaner and greener place to live."

In Kingston, more than 41 volunteers from the Union of Kingston Students used their Capital Clean-up kit to remove 3.8 tonnes of rubbish from 130m² of the River Thames in Kingston, including 11 trollies. By highlighting the amount of rubbish beneath the Thames the project aims to deter dumping into the river.

Sarah Dutton, volunteering project

design and development co-ordinator at the Union of Kingston Students said: "It was exciting to have Capital Clean-up on board, helping to support us in becoming independently sustainable, which will allow for the project to grow and continue."

Last summer the mayor visited the Marcus Garvey Park community group in Hammersmith and Fulham, who used their funding to revamp a communal park blighted by graffiti and anti-social behaviour, and created a colourful wall mural to make the area more appealing. Volunteers and children from local schools undertook the cleaning, scouring and painting of the walls over five events.

Sean Adamson, chairman of the Friends of Marcus Garvey Park community group, said: "Because of anti-social behaviour and rubbish dumping, we have been working on a project to revitalise Marcus Garvey Park and bring it back into community use."

"We're now cleaning up the park and as it's in between two schools, we have painted a mural on the wall to make it a nice focal point, making it a nicer, safer, environment for everyone, especially young people, to enjoy."



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NEWS FROM HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM

'Inflated town hall salaries' face axe

FROM PAGE 1

committees: £6,183, leader of the opposition: £17,874.

Under the new deal, the council will save £14,296 by reducing senior councillors' pay as follows: the leader: £32,186.70, deputy leader: £26,816.40, other cabinet members: £21,454.20, chief whip: £21,454.20, deputy chief whip: £5,000, chair of committees: £5,564.70, leader of the opposition: £16,086.60.

Councillor Cowan, who is taking a £70-a-week cut, said: "We are demonstrating commitment to finding innovative, radical ways of saving money and protecting services. We pledged to bring an end to unnecessary roles and inflated salaries at the Town Hall – and we are doing that."

The council is to save a further £600,000 by axing seven highly-paid staff posts; the executive director of finance and corporate services, the director of communications and policy, the executive director of housing services, the executive director of environment and leisure services, the deputy director of finance, the director for customer and business development and the executive director for transport and technical services.

"By axing costly executive director and deputy director posts, and making sensible reductions to other senior management roles, we have saved £600,000," said Councillor Cowan.

"We are rejecting the government's suggestion that we raise council tax by two per cent this year. Instead, we have introduced new and radical ways of setting budgets and achieving smarter savings. This has enabled us to defend Charing Cross Hospital, freeze council tax, pay for record numbers of police on local streets and protect frontline services such as refuse collection and street cleaning.

"Many of our residents are already struggling to make ends meet. Austerity is a very real thing for them, especially for our older and disabled residents – the very people who would have been hit hardest by council tax rises.



■ RADICAL APPROACH: Council leader Stephen Cowan said the authority had found innovative ways to preserve funding for key services

"In Hammersmith and Fulham we've abolished home care charges, we're continuing to cover the cost of the Independent Living Allowance and we've cut all sorts of other fees and charges to our residents.

"We've done that to ease the cost of living for people in the borough and we're not going to undo all that good work just because the Chancellor suggests it."

Instead, the council says it is cutting waste and coming up with more innovative ways to balance its books.

The council's government grant has been slashed by £66million since 2010 and it has to make another £15million of savings this year.

Recent savings include:

■ cutting £350,000 previously spent on council propaganda

■ cutting senior management costs by £600,000 in the last 18 months

■ cutting councillors' allowances by 10 per cent

■ renegotiating contracts with suppliers and developers to get better deals

■ reducing office costs and improving the use of IT systems.

Explaining how the council has been able to avoid both council tax increases and service cuts, councillor Cowan said: "Eye-watering levels of cuts in our government grant have meant we have had to look elsewhere for the funds we need to keep children safe from abuse, to look after vulnerable residents and to keep the streets clean.

"We've had some major successes in re-negotiating planning deals with developers. That's given us an extra £51million with considerably more in the pipeline and, while the majority of this will go towards building new affordable homes, these funds will also be used to provide physical and social infrastructure and environmental improvements and thereby releases other funding to protect services."

The proposed freeze in council tax will be decided on at a council meeting on February 24 at Hammersmith Town Hall.

Cinema sets its stalls out for live West End entertainment

DOMINIC West fans are in for a steamy Vue year as the premium entertainment group offers the best seat in the house for the star's latest stage show.

West features in a lead role in the National Theatre's stylish and intimate production of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*.

The show is part of Vue's January line-up as the cinema group beams live events direct from London's West End via satellite to their state-of-the-art venues.

As well as West's stage performance, Vue Fulham Broadway is offering customers the best seat in the house for a range of big screen New Year highlights. Kevin Styles, man-

aging director Vue UK and Ireland commented: "Our January line-up heralds the start of what is set to be a fantastic year ahead for event cinema at Vue.

"With Dominic West and his *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* we are once again offering our customers the best seat in the house for the most talked about and sought-after West End shows. But he isn't the only big name on the bill. We have the fantastic *Taming of the Shrew* from the Bolshoi Ballet, *Jane Eyre* from the National Theatre Live, the jaw-dropping extreme sports film *Don't Crack Under Pressure*, and smash cult cartoon *Dragon*

Ball Z: Resurrection F in 3D. There really is something for everyone."

Highlights include:

■ January 26 – ROH Live: *Two Pigeons/Rhapsody*

■ January 28 – NT Live: *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*

■ January 29 – Lazer Team *The Movie*

Vue UK, is part of the largest cinema group in the world outside of the US, Vue International, providing cinema fans with what managers say is "an unbeatable screen, seat and sound experience for the ultimate evening of big screen entertainment".

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■ FUNDING ISSUES: Charing Cross Hospital

Call for hospital 'crisis' talks

HEALTH Secretary Jeremy Hunt has been urged to hold "crisis talks" with Hammersmith and Fulham's council leader over the threat to services at Charing Cross Hospital.

Councillor Stephen Cowan has called on Mr Hunt to "act now" as the cost of contentious changes to local health services spirals out of control.

The North West London NHS 'Shaping a Healthier Future' programme has been dogged by controversy since its launch, with a recent Independent Commission chaired by Michael Mansfield QC calling for an immediate halt to the scheme, which would see a majority of

services at Charing Cross Hospital axed. Figures in the report show how costs have soared, ballooning from £112 million in 2012 to £1.3 billion now, a ten-fold increase.

Councillor Cowan said: "Michael Mansfield's superb independent report drove a coach and horses through the plans to close Charing Cross Hospital, and called for an immediate stop to the process.

"But as each day passes without a halt, we are seeing costs soar to eye-watering levels, with current estimates putting the price of this scheme at £1.3 billion.

"As Secretary of State, Je-

remy Hunt has the power to call a halt to these dangerous changes before any further damage is done – or any more money wasted.

"I am hopeful that, when confronted with the impact these plans will have and their massive cost, he will see sense and act. That's why I have called on him to get round the table with me and other local council leaders to hammer out a sensible way forward."

Councillor Cowan and the leaders of four neighbouring boroughs have written to Mr Hunt to discuss the Independent Healthcare Commission report and recommendations.

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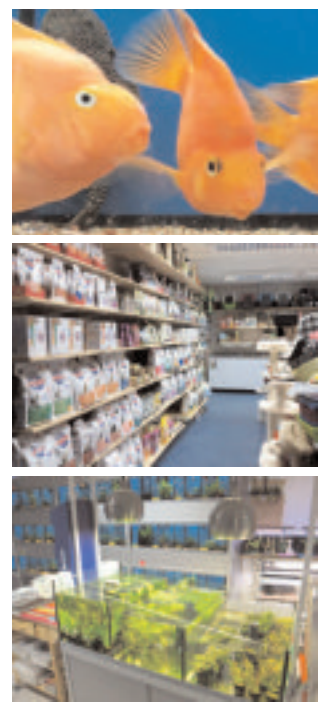
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NEWS FROM HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM

Project in the running for vital funding

BIG-HEARTED councillor Larry Culhane is running a half marathon in aid of the Barons Court Project, which supports Hammersmith and Fulham residents who are homeless or living with mental health problems.

Funds raised by the Labour councillor will support practical services including showers, laundry and cost-price meals, as well as the activities and life-skills training the project runs.

The project celebrated its 30th birthday last July with an event attended by *EastEnders* actor Jake Wood. You can find out more about the project at www.baronscourtproject.org

Cllr Culhane, of North End Ward, said: "The volunteers at the project do an amazing job with some of our most vulnerable neighbours. However, they are desperate to increase the life-skills training and employability skills sessions they run and the funds we hope to raise will pay for extra classes each week to develop the potential of those who use the project."

Michael Angus, director of the Barons Court Project, said: "We serve over 150 people a year and greet up to 35 people per day. Our centre is busier than ever and we have more rough sleepers coming through our doors."



■ COMMUNITY SUPPORT: Activities at the Barons Court Project prove its value to vulnerable residents

Rebuke for fancy dress 'terrorist' after Tube scare

BY GEOFF BAKER

geoff@londonweeklynews.co.uk

POLICE and commuters have condemned a man in fancy dress who could have been shot dead after panicking Tube passengers in Fulham by appearing to be a suicide bomber – with a "bomb" strapped across his chest.

The fake terrorist, who is from Portugal, scared commuters at Fulham Broadway but said he was only "having fun".

But police said it was a witless act and outraged commuters have hit out at Pedro Fonseca for his "stupidity".

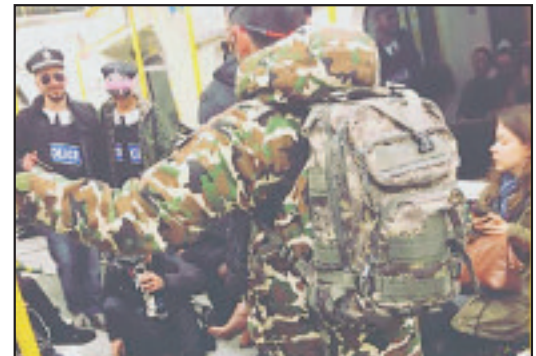
As the capital is on terror alert, with hundreds more armed police on patrol in the wake of the Isis attacks in Paris, Mr Fonseca could have found himself going home in a coffin as Scotland Yard said in December that after the Paris atrocity, officers in London would be permitted to shoot suspected terrorists without negotiating with them.

Mr Fonseca claimed he was only dressed as a soldier when he boarded the Tube at Putney Bridge. He said commuters were mistaken that his frightening outfit – head to toe camouflage with a rucksack and a package on his chest – was terrorists' gear.

Mr Fonseca was on his way to Covent Garden for a fancy dress party when he was snapped on the District Line.

But at least one alarmed commuter in the same carriage considered taking Mr Fonseca down when he mistook his bag for a bomb.

Alec Wilson, a 29-year-old graphic designer who snapped the fake bomber when he saw him at Fulham Broadway and posted the picture on Twitter and Instagram, said he was



■ TUBEWAY ARMY: Pedro Fonseca scared some passengers

making fellow travellers feel "very uncomfortable".

"Dressing up as a suicide bomber on a London Underground service might be the most stupid, disrespectful joke I've ever seen," Mr Wilson commented.

He added: "The guy in the camouflage had a black camera-type bag with what looked like a detonation cord strapped to his chest. I looked up and was really worried for a moment, my immediate reaction for a split second was to tackle him. A lot of other passengers looked really uncomfortable around them. I presume it was some kind of stag night or fancy dress or something but it was very strange and really inappropriate."

But Mr Fonseca said: "We were on the train having fun and I was dressed as a soldier and my mates were dressed as policemen."

"It wasn't a fake bomb I was wearing around my chest, it was a small bag I was using to keep my wallet and phone in so I had easy access to them. I didn't want to put them in the backpack, where I wouldn't be able to see them or get to them easily."

He said other commuters were having fun with him and his friends, who were dressed as police and were even carrying fake guns.

"Some were even asking my friends who were dressed as police to handcuff them to the hand rails for a joke. Honestly, we didn't have any problems at all," said Mr Fonseca, who explained that the 'detonation wire' was actually a key ring. London is a big city so if there had been a problem, I'm sure that the police would have been on us straight away."

But at least one fellow passenger was unimpressed by the costume, which saw some Londoners saying "It's a dumb way to get yourself killed".

A British Transport Police spokesman said: "While this incident was not reported to us by anyone on the train, it is insensitive and crass behaviour in the light of recent terrorist attacks across the world and the threat to the UK currently at severe."

"It is important for everyone to remember the need to be responsible and considerate to fellow passengers while making your journey."

Eight months of roadworks ahead

FULHAM residents and businesses face the start of eight months of disruption, diversion and traffic jams from roadworks as National Grid undertakes essential gas pipe repairs.

Starting this month, the National Grid's work represents part of a £1 billion replacement of 1,800 miles of gas pipes across London, which are no longer fit for purpose.

The first phase of work begins with a westbound closure to traffic on King's Road lasting until September – and road diversions are in place throughout to try lessen disruption.

"These works are going to cause some local disruption for residents," warned councillor

Wesley Harcourt, Hammersmith and Fulham council's cabinet member for transport, environment and residents' services.

"We have raised concerns with National Grid and in response they have set out to minimise the disruption as far as possible."

"We will monitor the works closely and do everything we can to represent residents' complaints to National Grid if they arise."

The first phase of works, running from February to late April, will be between Gunter Grove and Edith Grove, with a diversion for westbound traffic along the southside of Edith

Grove and up Ashburnham Road. The following phase of work, from Stanley Bridge to Gunter Grove, will run from May until September, with a diversion running west along Fulham Road.

An extra diversion route will be used during Chelsea Football Club's home games.

National Grid hosted two drop-in sessions and consulted with local residents and businesses to raise awareness of the potential disruption before they break ground.

For more details on the work, or to register a complaint, residents are asked to visit the National Grid's website.

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LONDON WIDE

Mayor rejects regulations to limit taxi app firm

BY LWN REPORTER

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UBER have won the latest skirmish in their often bitterly fought battle against London's black taxis.

London mayor Boris Johnson has snubbed a series of proposals which would have heavily restricted the minicab booking app.

The mayor said he had rejected what he described as "neanderthal" and "ludicrous" calls from London's traditional taxi drivers to crack down on the company.

Mr Johnson had previously consulted on plans to limit the number of private hire vehicles in London, ban several features of the ground-breaking Uber app and force users to face at least a five-minute delay before booking a minicab.

London black cab operators have campaigned heavily for new restrictions to be imposed on the company, culminating in angry protests at City Hall last year. Police released footage of a protestor assaulting a security guard who was knocked out as protesters tried to force their way into the building.

However, Mr Johnson said it was not possible to "turn the clock back on technological progress".

He also admitted that he had been lobbied heavily by the government not to impose any new regulations.

He said his "friends in government" were "adamant" that they didn't want to limit the number of private hire vehicles in London. Asked about reports

that the chancellor George Osborne had personally texted him to lobby against the plans, Boris replied that it was a subject which "keenly exercises the government".

However, he said it was a "category error" by the government to assume that "Uber must be a great thing because it's Californian and tech" and he said that the rise of the company needed to be managed carefully.

The mayor announced there would be some new regulations governing private hire vehicles. Under new proposals to be considered by TfL, Uber drivers will be forced to undertake English language tests in order to retain their licences. Mr Johnson also announced a new consultation on removing the congestion charge exemption for minicabs.

This latter proposal is likely to be resisted by the mayor's own party, however. Conservative Assembly member Richard Tracey said he had "significant concerns" about the plans which "will increase fares and reduce choice for Londoners".

Labour politicians in the London Assembly were quick to call on the mayor to reveal full details of all the lobbying he had received on the issue from government.

Labour assembly member Val Shawcross said: "For months there have been strong rumours that the Chancellor and Prime Minister have been personally lobbying Boris over Uber."

"For just as long City Hall have stonewalled our FoI attempts to get to the bottom of this."

"The government are there to serve the public interest. It would be incredibly worrying if senior government ministers were secretly lobbying for private companies outside the proper processes."

Uber said the announcement was "good news for Londoners and a victory for common sense".

An Uber spokesman added: "We're pleased Transport for London has listened to the views of passengers and drivers, dropping the bonkers ideas proposed last year like compulsory five-minute wait times and banning showing cars in apps."

A spokesperson for the London Taxi Drivers Association said that the mayor had pandered to the private hire lobby and described the new regulations as a "disgrace".



■ ROAD TO RUIN? Many black cab drivers are dismayed by the mayor's position on Uber



■ MESSAGE: Mayor Boris Johnson said it was not possible to turn the clock back on progress

Step into the story of Canary Wharf

THE London Society is running a Canary Wharf walking tour on Saturday, February 13, between 10am and noon.

The Wharf is one of London's planning success stories, a feat of civic transformation on a grand scale. Only 28 years after construction began in 1988, it functions as a financial centre to rival the City of London.

But there is more to the Wharf than commerce. It is a socially integrated district where people work, live and play – and with the arrival of Crossrail in 2018 a flourishing future is assured.

The tour follows major thoroughfares and winds through public spaces to provide a sense of place and an understanding of both the built and social complexity of the district. Walkers will be able to understand the challenges faced when inserting mega construction projects into the historic super-structure of the former West India Docks with its vast tracts of open water.

There will be opportunity to see the work of such architects as Foster & Partners, Cesar Pelli and SOM, and consider the future direction the Wharf is taking as development continues into neighbouring Wood Wharf. The tour includes the upper levels of Foster & Partners' Crossrail station and concludes at the practice's spectacular underground station.

To book the event, go to the website london-society.org.uk

Just desserts at jail restaurant

YOU can enjoy a sumptuous three-course lunch on April 15 at Brixton prison's The Clink, voted best ethical restaurant in the 2015 *Observer* Food Monthly Awards.

The Clink Charity's prime objective is to make a substantial lasting reduction of re-offending rates of ex-offenders by training and placing graduates upon their release into the hospitality industry.

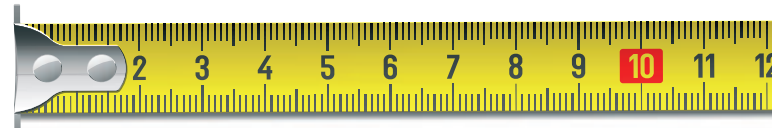
The charity represents a genuine opportunity for change, offering prisoners the chance to gain food preparation, food service and cleaning qualifications as well as experience within an exciting, operational business and in-depth guidance to find full-time employment within the hospitality industry upon release. The Clink Charity operates the Clink Restaurants at HMP High Down, HMP Styal, HMP Cardiff and HMP Brixton in partnership with Her Majesty's Prison Service. The Clink Charity aims to operate 10 training projects by 2017.

A garden project was launched in 2014 at HMP Send and produce is being grown there for use at both Brixton and Highdown. The latest restaurant opened at HMP Styal in April 2015, the first restaurant in a women's prison.

The aim of The Clink Charity is to reduce re-offending rates of ex-offenders by training and placing graduates, upon their release, into employment in the hospitality industry with the support of a career mentoring scheme.

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LONDON WIDE

From a drama to a crisis and back. How a West End star took on her toughest role



■ THE VOICE: Siobhan Dillon as Ellen and Chris Peluso as Chris in the West End smash-hit musical *Miss Saigon*.

Picture: Johan Persson

FINDING out you have breast cancer at any time is a terrible shock but for Siobhan Dillon it came just days into landing a dream role in one of the biggest shows in the West End.

Now recovered and back to performing, Siobhan's story is one which should act as an inspiration to young women who are diagnosed with the disease and give hope to those who are themselves undergoing treatment, writes *Nicky Sweetland*.

Siobhan shot to fame following her appearance on the BBC1 talent search, *How do you Solve a problem like Maria?* The show, to cast the leading role in the revival of *The Sound of Music*, was eventually won by Connie Fisher but Dillon's calibre as a leading lady was apparent and she went on to enjoy success in the West End productions of *Grease* and *Legally Blonde*, as well as playing Molly Jensen in the smash-hit musical *Ghost* at the Piccadilly Theatre.

In February last year, Siobhan landed the role of Ellen in the multi-award-winning smash-hit musical *Miss Saigon* at the Prince Edward Theatre, and I was lucky enough to interview her before she took on the part.

However, just two weeks later everything changed following a frightening discovery. Siobhan was diagnosed with breast cancer and what followed was a whirlwind six months which included some very low points, but eventually resulted in her recovery and return to the stage.

I met Siobhan in her dressing room where she told me how she had first discovered the tumour and explained the medical treatment which eventually led to her return to *Saigon*.

"When I found the lump it was a kind of crazy situation because I had a feeling about six months prior to diagnosis that there was something wrong."

Siobhan had asked the GP for a mammogram six months prior to diag-

nosis, but was told that at just 30 years old and with no visible problem, the NHS wouldn't fund one.

The NHS breast screening programme in England includes all women aged between 47 and 73 for screening every three years. If you are younger than 50 however, the risk of breast cancer is much lower and younger women have more dense breast tissue which makes mammograms more difficult to read.

Although breast cancer is the most common cancer in women aged under 40, MRI scanning is only used to detect the disease in the those deemed to be at high risk, and as that wasn't the case with Siobhan, her tumour was left undetected until six months later.

"I went away and self examined like there was no tomorrow because I just had this weird feeling. It wasn't like a physical feeling. It was like a spiritual, vibey, hippy kind of feel."

Around 5,600 women aged under 45 are diagnosed with breast cancer every year. Among women aged 35 to 39 in the UK, around 1,300 cases of breast cancer are diagnosed each year and although it is advised that women self examine at least once every month, in truth most don't do it at all. Leaflets and documents are readily available in surgeries which can advise you on the best method of identification, with techniques which include lying down or standing in front of a mirror, but it was in the shower that Siobhan first discovered that something had changed.

"The first time I did it in the shower was when I felt it and it's unbelievable to me that people don't just say do it in the shower, because it takes all of the questioning away from what's normal or what isn't. You can feel everything, for some reason. Whatever it is, that was when I first found it."

The tumour she found was small, but following tests was found to be malignant. Siobhan was called for an appointment with the oncologist where she was told the result and assigned a

specialist breast care nurse. Understandably after receiving the diagnosis, Siobhan went into a state of shock but at first tried to carry on as normal.

"What followed? It felt like one of those movies where you get the white noise. People are talking, their mouths are moving but you can't hear the words. That happened for about a week actually but I came and did the show on the Friday night in denial."

As the job in *Miss Saigon* was still so new, Siobhan's parents hadn't yet been to see the show and were scheduled to watch it the very next day.

"I did those three shows in a little



With all that has happened I now feel much more passionate about acting and singing"

Siobhan Dillon

bit of shock, a bit of denial. I wasn't going to let any tears affect the show because my parents hadn't seen me in it yet so I wanted to perform."

The company manager, Katy, told Siobhan to take some time off with her family, but she was determined her parents would be able to watch her.

"She (Katy) said 'They can see the show when you come back' but I thought 'What if I don't come back? What if this is really bad and I don't make it? What if they don't ever see me in *Miss Saigon*?' Those things go through your mind."

After performing three more shows, Siobhan gave in and took some time off to follow her treatment, which included first a lumpectomy and then a course of radiotherapy. Her oncologist advised that anything that increases any feeling

of anxiety was not advisable and so along with the Cameron Mackintosh office, the decision was made for Siobhan to take leave from the show until she was fully recovered. Anxiety and depression in those diagnosed with breast cancer is very common, with many struggling to come to terms with the enormity and impact of the disease. Along with feelings of anxiety, Siobhan also felt cheated, having only just started a dream role, to then have it so cruelly taken away.

"I really felt like I was missing out and I felt really angry that I had to miss out. For the first couple of weeks I didn't know if I was coming or going. I knew that I wanted to be on stage but I didn't feel strong enough and mentally straight enough to perform, but I still wanted to be here. That's what really messed my head up. On the Saturday matinee before I went off I had this really strange panic attack type of thing where I thought I'd forgotten the words, you know. I was only two weeks into the contract. I had this weird feeling and my heart started banging out my chest and because of all the worry and everything that had been going on it (performing) just made it ten times worse."

So, Siobhan was forced to walk away, all be it just for a few months. She rested and undertook the therapy programme, which included some high intensity booster radiotherapy sessions which cause severe fatigue. Just two weeks after finishing her treatment, however, she felt strong enough to get back on stage and couldn't wait to get started.

"The first week was really tiring. I was always going to come back, in my mind, because I felt flippin' short changed when I had to leave, so it was my goal. With all that's happened I feel much more passionate about acting and about singing. I want to do the best job I can in every single show, and I'm not saying that it wasn't the case before hand but it's just a whole different level of appreciation of the craft now."

Having cancer has changed Siobhan's outlook on life and made her appreciate her friends, family and career in a different way. She will have to continue to be monitored and has to take hormone therapy for the next ten years to help prevent further problems.

Siobhan's also committed to helping others who are diagnosed with the disease and has plans to do more charity work, including opening a cafe which will give a percentage of its profits to the cause. She already has a fantastic name picked out for the place which will promote wellness by serving organic health foods and will provide an area for relaxation.

In the mean time, she is just pleased to be back on the stage and is loving the challenge of being part of such a fantastic show. *Miss Saigon* will close at the end of February before it transfers to Broadway, so you have just a few weeks left to catch Siobhan playing Ellen in this once-in-a-lifetime theatrical event. You can visit the website for more details – miss-saigon.com

Siobhan will then be starring alongside the multi-award-winning actress Glen Close in the English National Opera's production of *Sunset Boulevard*, which opens at the London Coliseum in April.

If you would like any help and advice on any of the issues raised within this article please contact The Lavender Trust at Breast Cancer Care – which raises money specifically to fund information and support for younger women with breast cancer. It is the only fund in the UK dedicated to addressing the particular needs of this age group and its website is breastcancercare.org.uk

You can also join thousands of women in London to help raise money for breast cancer charities by taking part in the annual Moonwalk in May. The iconic event, which has been running for over 20 years, takes place on Clapham Common and is a fantastic way to help raise funds for breast cancer research. For more details you can visit walkthewalk.org

TV stars get to battle stations

BY GEOFF BAKER
geoff@londonweeklynews.co.uk

TELEVISION'S *Made in Chelsea* stars Hugo Taylor and Georgia Toffolo have joined the No Crossrail in Chelsea campaign, which now claims to have 10,000 supporters fighting TfL plans for a Crossrail 2 station on the King's Road.

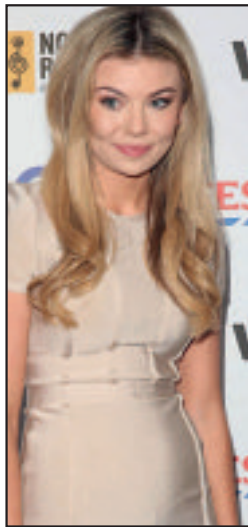
The No Crossrail in Chelsea group opposes plans for a Crossrail 2 diversion through Chelsea and wants the route from Victoria to Clapham Junction to be direct.

"I cannot believe the powers that be are planning a monstrous new railway station in the heart of such a unique and unspoilt gem at Chelsea," said Hugo Taylor.

"I love Chelsea because the lifestyle is great, the vibe is magical and there is such a fantastic community spirit, but this Crossrail proposal will turn Chelsea into an unrecognisable building site for eight years and just another cloned High Street upon completion.

"Our public transport is already excellent. Two tube stations and five bus routes, our community is already well served. Spending more than £1 billion on a vanity project that locals simply don't want would be dereliction of the highest order."

Georgia Toffolo said the money should be spent on Lon-



■ PROTEST: Georgia Toffolo

don's needier boroughs and not in well-heeled Chelsea.

"Spending more than £1 billion on a huge Crossrail 2 station in Chelsea is a terrible idea," she said. "The money would be far better spent on an area of London that really needs redevelopment, instead of on the city's richest area.

"This station will ruin everything that we all love about Chelsea. People my age adore the King's Road and the Chelsea village because it is unique and characterful. With two tube stations, five bus routes and access to Crossrail 2

from Victoria, we are hardly cut off either.

"I am supporting the No Crossrail in Chelsea campaign because over the last few months it has brought the community together – young and old, residents and business, visitors and shoppers – demonstrating the overwhelming local opposition to this mad station plan."

The anti-Crossrail campaigners revealed that more than half of all responses to the TfL consultation for the entire Crossrail 2 route oppose a station in Chelsea.

"TfL have revealed that there were 19,000 responses to the consultation in total for the whole route – and the No Crossrail in Chelsea campaign have copies of 7,250 returns opposing a station in their village, are aware of others which bring the total to 8,000 – and some further 1,500 responses supporting local MP Greg Hands' stance that the station should instead be at Imperial Wharf in Fulham," said a spokesman for the campaign.

Chris Lenon, Chair of the No Crossrail in Chelsea campaign, commented: "We are delighted that Hugo and Georgia have joined our campaign. Young and old, residents and businesses, visitors and shoppers – they all oppose a station here.

"As well as London's overwhelming rejection of a Crossrail 2 station in Chelsea in the TfL consultation, we now have

over 10,000 petition signatures opposing the proposal. In the face of this overwhelming opposition, we believe TfL and the mayor are duty bound to scrap the proposal for a station on the King's Road from their plans for Crossrail 2."

Greg Hands, MP for Chelsea and Fulham, said: "I firmly believe that Imperial Wharf should continue being seriously considered as an alternative option for

a Crossrail 2 station, and I also ask whether it should be the preferred site for a station in Chelsea and Fulham."

■ DISMAY:
Hugo Taylor opposes plans for a new station



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Sainsbury's Store	38 Stratton Street	Mayfair	W1J 8LT
Sainsbury's Store	15-17 Tottenham Court Road	Central London	W1T 1BJ
Co-op	504-506 Harrow Road	Paddington	W9 3QA
Tesco Classic Metro	22-25 Bedford Street	London	WC2E 9EQ
Co-op	Golden Cross House	London	WC2R 0RG
Notting Hill Gate Library	1 Pembridge Square	Notting Hill	W2 4EW
Kensal Library	20 Golborne Road		W10 5PF
Coach & Horses Pub	23 Greek Street	Soho	W1D 5DH
Pimlico Library	Lupus Street	Pimlico	SW1V 3EY

Kensington & Chelsea NEWS

pick up points

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North Kensington Library	108 Ladbroke Grove	Kensington	W11 1PZ
Brompton Library	210 Old Brompton Road	London	SW5 0BS
The Tabernacle, Notting Hill	35 Powis Square	Notting Hill	W11 2AY
Chelsea Library	Chelsea Old Town Hall	Chelsea	SW3 5EZ
Chelsea Sports Centre	Chelsea Manor Street	Chelsea	SW3 5PL
Avonmore Lib. & Neighbourhood Ctr	North End Crescent		W14 6TG

Fulham Chronicle

pick up points

Fulham Library	598 Fulham Road	SW6 5NX
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Hammersmith CHRONICLE

pick up points

The Grove Neighbourhood Centre	7 Bradmore Park Road	Hammersmith	W6 0DT
Hammersmith Library	Shepherd's Bush Road		W6 7AT

Shepherd's Bush CHRONICLE

pick up points

Westfield Library	6 Wood Lane		W12 7BF
Askew Road Library	87-91 Askew Road		W12 9AS

New ale provides crumbs of comfort for waste campaign

A LONDON brewery has found a way to transform unwanted bread into beer after research found that UK households waste at least 24 million slices of bread a year.

The Toast Ale brew, which is launched this week, uses one slice of fresh surplus bread from bakeries, delis and other sandwich makers to help brew each bottle.

According to food waste charity Feedback, the aim of the project is to tackle the "global issue of food waste" until it eventually puts itself "out of business".

Tristram Stuart, Feedback founder and creator of the Toast Ale idea, said: "Tackling the global issue of food waste has taken me all over the world. It was at the Brussels Beer Project where I first found out about this innovative brewing process that turns a colossal global problem into a delicious, drinkable solution.

"We hope to put ourselves out of business. The day there's no waste bread is the day Toast Ale can no longer exist."

The beer, which will be available online at £3 per bottle



■ BREAD LABEL: Tristram Stuart and the new ale, Toast

from Thursday, January 28, is being produced by Hackney Brewery in east London. It is made by mashing the surplus bread into breadcrumbs before brewing it with malted barley, hops and yeast to make a distinctively flavoured ale.

Celebrity fans of the beer already reportedly include food waste champions Jamie Oliver and Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall.

All profits will go to Feedback, which aims to halve food waste by 2030, after it reported that 15 millions of tons of food are wasted every year across the UK.

A spokeswoman added that, of all food items, bread was the "worst offender", with at least 24 million slices being thrown away in UK homes.

The amount of baked goods binned in households, she said, would be enough to prevent 26 million people across the globe suffering from malnutrition.

Jon Swain from Hackney Brewery said: "We absolutely jumped at the chance to join Feedback's fight against food waste.

"The important thing for us, as brewers, was to create a beer that tasted good and stood up against other craft beers. We worked hard to brew a beer that wasn't just a fad but something that people could enjoy time after time and would have a significant impact."

LONDON WIDE

Safe roads in hands of young designers

TRANSPORT for London is turning to schoolchildren to come up with bright ideas for how to make roads safer, by asking them to design the next generation of trucks.

The Future Truck Design Awards scheme, launched at the Freight In The City Expo at Alexandra Palace, is an opportunity for school, college and university students to develop concepts that make transporting goods in urban areas safer, cleaner and more cost-effective.

Organised by Transport for London (TfL) as part of the Safer Trucks programme, the competition has been designed to encourage young people to understand the complexities involved in meeting challenges of safety and sustainability.

Prizes on offer when short-listed entrants present their designs to the leading truck designers in Europe include £1,000 cash.

The winning entries will also be showcased at the Transport Museum in London's Covent Garden next summer.

Ian Wainwright, Head of Freight and Fleet at TfL, said: "The industry's challenge is to ensure goods are delivered

safely and with minimal disruption. As towns and cities grow, our streets get busier with pedestrians, cyclists, cars and vans and this challenge becomes greater. Truck manufacturers are already investing considerable resources in innovative features to address this and our Future Truck Design Awards is an exciting opportunity to open the field further.

"We are committed to improving road safety and hope this competition will help shape the way we transport goods in our cities.

"Their work could accelerate the development of safer urban trucks, generate ideas that help

inform future vehicle design and we are looking forward to introducing new talent to Europe's leading truck manufacturers."

Trucks in Britain collectively carry 68 per cent of all UK freight, and with a growing population and increasing demand for round-the-clock availability of goods and services, that volume will only continue to grow.

The industry's challenge is to ensure trucks can deliver goods as safely as possible in towns and cities, while streets continue to get busier with pedestrians, cyclists, cars and vans.

Vast improvements have been made in the design and technology of trucks over the years, but this is young designers' opportunity to present their ideas – potentially radical and gamechanging ideas – that could be incorporated into the trucks of the future. Individuals, teams or classes can submit an entry in three categories – whole truck design, safety feature and system of operation – to www.futuretruckdesignawards.co.uk before March 11. Winners will be announced at an awards ceremony at the Commercial Vehicle Show on April 26.



■ **CHARITY STALWART:** St John's Wood resident Pamela Sinclair has been elected as Chief Barker of Variety, the Children's Charity, for 2016.

In her 40-year-long stint at Variety, Pamela has held the position of Chair of the Variety Great Days Out and is set to continue her position of Chair of the Wheelchairs Committee.

Commenting on her appointment as Chief Barker, the title given to the chairman of the trustees, Pamela said: "The fantastic work that Variety does in supporting sick,

disadvantaged and disabled children has always been a source of inspiration to me, and I look forward to a year of further progress and achievement."

The showbiz charity said Pamela's dedication as Chair of the Wheelchair Committee has helped the programme donate more than 4,000 specialist wheelchairs to children and young people across the UK since its inception.

As well as her work for Variety in the UK, Pamela has also been involved with the activities of Variety International

for many years. She was appointed to be one of its vice-presidents in 2007 and launched Variety's International Mobility Programme in the same year.

In addition to her work with Variety, Pamela has served as a Governor of Castlebar School in West London for three years.

The school focuses on children aged from four to 11 years with special educational needs, in particular children who have severe learning difficulties, including autistic spectrum disorder.

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Next in store for Oxford Street...

NEXT has signed a deal to open a landmark store on London's Oxford Street in three years.

The FTSE 100 fashion retailer, which this month blamed warm weather for a rare patch of disappointing Christmas trading, has agreed to take over three floors of the Plaza shopping centre.

The Plaza's owner, German landlord Siroso, is planning to redevelop it, knocking together 20 units to create a bigger selling space.

Next's plans come as retail-

ers flock to the east end of Oxford Street — once the most unfashionable part — in anticipation of Tottenham Court Road's access to Crossrail in 2018.

Primark opened a store in 2012, which it intends to extend because trading has been so strong. Retailers Zara have followed suit.

Benetton and New Look have signed up for a new scheme due to be built by the FTSE 250 property company Great Portland Estates in two years.

According to the property agency Savills, 11 brands have opened "statement" stores on Oxford Street in the past year.

Anthony Selwyn, head of central London retail at Savills, said Next's decision to open in the reconfigured Plaza represented "how the retailers see this part of the street. It's becoming so important."

A source close to Next said that its planned store at the Plaza would not be seen as a flagship, however. "Next does not have any flagship stores as a matter of policy," he said.

LONDON WIDE

Demand for property goes 'inside out' as buyers rush to claim homes in Hounslow

BY LWN REPORTER
editorial@londonweeklynews.co.uk

THE west London borough of Hounslow enjoyed the biggest growth in demand for property in the last six months of 2015.

New research suggests that with demand up by 50 per cent and an average house price marginally over £300,000, the borough looks set to continue this upward trend, with prices having increases by 12 per cent already over the course of 2015.

Meanwhile, the royal borough of Kensington and Chelsea and the city of Westminster were in the bottom ten property hotspots, with only 16 per cent of property demand.

The statistics come from the latest Property Hotspots Index, produced by *eMoov.co.uk*. The index records the change in supply and demand for the most populated locations across the UK, by monitoring the total number of properties sold in comparison to those on sale. Experts at *eMoov.co.uk* say the likely factors behind the Hounslow increase are "almost certainly the ongoing infrastructural and economic developments in the borough".

They add: "Hounslow is due to profit considerably thanks to its close proximity to the Crossrail development, as well as the delayed decision of the third runway at Heathrow, which should also see property

demand revived for the immediate future."

Despite being home to one of the most expensive average London house prices, demand for property in Richmond upon Thames has also seen an increase, up 17 per cent since the third quarter of 2015.

Despite the run up to the festive period, London's outer boroughs and commuter belt remained hot for property demand in the last quarter of 2015.

Bexley is once again the most in demand property location in the UK, with demand still at a staggering 79 per cent.

To the east of the capital, Havering (71 per cent) and Barking and Dagenham (69 per cent) also rank highly, joined by the London Borough of Hillingdon (66 per cent) to the west and Sutton (66 per cent) south of the river, as the final borough to make the top 10.

Each of the boroughs making the top 10 hotspots currently offer an average house price lower than the London average.

However, as the capital's outer boroughs continue to outperform their more central neighbours, these five in particular will be the ones to watch in 2016, where an increase in prices is concerned.

Founder and chief executive of *eMoov.co.uk*, Russell Quirk, said: "I believe 2016 will see demand for London property continue to decline from the inside out and, as the exodus of



A NEW record was set for London and the UK housing market when 215 starter flats sold out in three hours in west London.

The collection of studios and one-bedroom apartments at Trinity Square in Hounslow, created by Galliard Homes, sold out off plan in a new sales speed record for the capital. Worth a combined £60 million, they were sold on November 5 and won't be ready to live in until 2017.

The *Evening Standard* reported that "during the course of three hours, almost £335,000 was spent per minute as more than 250 eager buyers, some of whom had camped out overnight, queued to purchase starter homes that were sold on a first-come, first-served basis".

Studios start from 301sq ft and the one-bedroom apartments from 484sq ft – both of which are still smaller than the size of some London Tube carriages.

Picture: Grant Silverman

buyers to the outer boroughs and commuter zones continues to build, the demand for property will inevitably intersect with the supply of housing available.

"When this does happen prices will rise and commuters may be forced even further afield."

These are just some of the places we've visited and heard about. None can, or should, be transported here wholesale but by combining them with our vibrant arts scene we can create something special that furthers the area's legacy.

In the first phase of consultation for the Portobello Village proposals, creating space for arts, culture and community was one of the top five responses from the local community. We have now identified multiple spaces in the scheme which could be used very flexibly to support arts, culture and creative enterprise. I'm delighted that so far more than 30 local people have offered to work more closely with us on how these spaces can develop in terms of content and ways of operating. Do contact me if you'd like to get involved; it's not too late to join the group.

Over the last few weeks we've all been mourning the loss of some of London's cultural icons and wondering how under difficult circumstances we make sure that new ones can emerge. It will always be challenging to both preserve the cultural legacy of a place – the stories, the styles, the artworks, and the people – as well as the innovative artistic environment that allowed that art to emerge in the first place. I believe now is the time for bold choices in how we contribute to the cultural life of the area to retain its vibrancy and central role in London's cultural heritage.

CULTURE is constantly changing and evolving. What is the cutting edge to one generation is old hat to the next and what was revolutionary in one era often evolves into mainstream cultural legacy.

We shouldn't try to pick the inheritance nor cast it away but rather leverage it to benefit present and future cultural development. Art can challenge the status quo and push against long held views. It can also strengthen our local identity and pride. The way we make space for arts and culture under the Westway must reflect what is already unique, whilst remaining open to that transformation and boundary breaking.

In North Kensington, we must celebrate what has gone before and is with us now. We equally must continue to push boundaries and look outwards for inspiration if we are to ensure this remains a place of exciting new, ground-breaking work. Across the UK, communities are grappling with similar challenges as the race for modernity clashes with prized neighbourhoods and communities. Colleagues and I have been looking at successful projects elsewhere in London and around the world to see how what they've done could be applied to the unique context of the Westway.

Architecture collection Assemble have just won the Turner Prize for their work with residents to use art and design to re-



UNDER THE WESTWAY

Westway Trust Chief Executive Angela McConville says we can't let North Kensington's cultural legacy pass into history because we're too conservative

vitalise a Liverpool community. Their projects were about a disappearing community, the polar opposite of the one here, but that community came together and created an exciting forward thinking vision for themselves.

Just last week members of my team visited Coin Street Community Builders to see first-hand how creating artistic outlets, exhibition spaces, pop-up shops and programmed public spaces, has turned the Southbank into a popular place for both domestic and international visitors, in turn supporting local businesses to thrive. We want to learn from these successful approaches, to maintain a sustainable creative environment for the people who live and work here.



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LONDON WIDE

Celebrations as Leighton's art is secured

BY LWN REPORTER
editorial@londonweeklynews.co.uk

LEIGHTON House Museum, the Kensington home and studio of Victorian artist and President of the Royal Academy Frederic, Lord Leighton, has announced that thanks to the unprecedented response to the public appeal campaign launched in September 2015, Leighton's painting *Interior of the Cappella Palatina* has now been acquired for the museum's permanent collections.

The acquisition was achieved with the support of the Friends of Leighton House, the Arts Council England/V&A Purchase Fund and through public donations.

Interior of the Cappella Palatina, a previously untraced painting by Leighton, was probably painted in the 1870s, and depicts the interior of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo, Sicily. The Cappella Palatina was built in the first half of the 12th century by the Norman king, Roger II, and is famous for the luminous gold Byzantine mosaics that line its walls.

"Leighton was very interested in architecture generally, but he seems to have been particularly anxious to accurately record the interior of this chapel. Although the study beautifully captures its atmosphere, with the play of light across the mosaics illuminating the east end of the chapel, Leighton took pains to faithfully represent all the architectural elements of the building and its decoration – even including a single figure standing on the left against a column to give a sense of scale," said a spokesman.

"Leighton's Arab Hall was based on another 12th century interior at a palace called La Zisa, also at Palermo. This painting demonstrates how captivated he was by these interiors and how closely they inspired his own Arab Hall.

"This is why the museum was so keen to add this picture to the permanent collection; to make the connection between Leighton's travels, his skills as a painter and the influences that were brought to bear on the design and construction of his extraordinary house.

"This picture makes these connections perfectly and will greatly enhance future visitors' enjoyment of the house."

Leighton House Museum is the

former home and studio of Lord Leighton (1830-1896). It is unique among the capital's museums in combining an exceptional collection of Victorian art with the intimacy of a private home. The house was designed by his great friend, the architect George Aitchison RA, as a showcase for artistic taste and to entertain and impress the foremost artists, collectors and celebrities of the day.

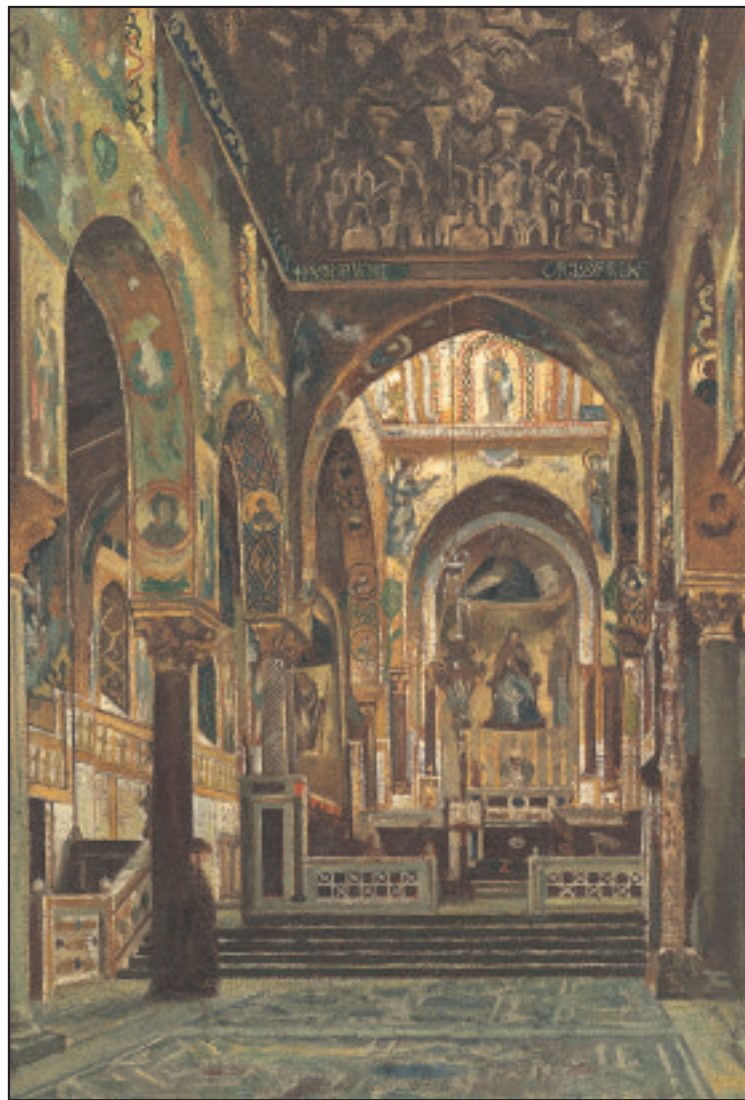
The exterior of Leighton House gives little clue as to the treasures that lie within. The highlight of any visit is the extraordinary Arab Hall which reflects Leighton's fascination with the Middle East, where he travelled widely. This room was built between 1877 and 1881 to display his outstanding collection of 16th and 17th century Islamic tiles and also contains mosaic floors, a gold mosaic frieze, set beneath a gilded dome, and a calming fountain.

The spokesman added: "Also not to be missed is Leighton's painting studio on the first floor, with its large north-facing window, picture slot and screen. Leighton produced all the works of his mature career in this room, including the iconic *Flaming June* which is now at the Museo de Arte Ponce, Puerto Rico."

Leighton was born in Scarborough, Yorkshire in 1830, to a wealthy medical family, the second of three children. At an early age he showed an interest in drawing and went on to study art on the continent, despite his parents' early reservations about his choice of career. Leighton did undeniably succeed – Queen Victoria bought his first major painting in 1855, and in 1878 he reached the pinnacle of his profession, with his election as President of the Royal Academy of Arts.

He also received numerous international honours and was highly regarded by his peers. However, the man himself remains something of an enigma. His private life was closely guarded – he lived alone, travelled alone and left no diaries. Even his letters make little reference to his personal circumstances.

Just before his death in 1896, Leighton was ennobled, becoming Baron Leighton of Stretton. He is the only British artist to have been awarded this honour and is buried in St Paul's Cathedral.



■ **CELEBRATIONS:** Leighton House Museum has now raised the necessary funds to acquire another of the famous Victorian artist's paintings, *Interior of the Capella Palatina*, 1875, main picture top. Below: Leighton's well-known *Flaming June*. Bottom left: an early portrait of the artist



Police learn to mind their languages

DUE to the growing number of people in London who cannot speak English, the Met has launched an eight-week drive to recruit new police officers who can understand any of 25 languages.

The Met says the capital is home to scores of different communities in which "at least 300 languages" are spoken.

"The Met works within these communities on a daily basis and a key part of gaining their confidence is to take into account their diversity and needs. Having officers who are able to communicate more effectively goes a long way towards achieving this," said a spokesman.

The chosen languages are: Arabic, Bengali, Bulgarian, Cantonese, Estonian, Farsi, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Romanian, Sinhala, Somali, Spanish, Tamil, Turkish, Urdu, Vietnamese and Yoruba.

Deputy Commissioner Craig Mackey said: "Following the success of the last campaign, this is an initiative we are keen to repeat. With the number of languages spoken in the capital there is a massive opportunity for us to build on our existing skills and help support Londoners. This invaluable knowledge and skill can be utilised to help support our policing and community engagement."

London tests technologies of the future

USING the River Thames to heat homes, testing electric bikes and trialling state-of-the-art smart parking bays are just some of the innovative projects to be put to the test in London as part of a Europe-wide technology drive.

London is joining forces with cities across Europe in a €25m project that aims to demonstrate how technology can improve the lives of their residents. Mayor of London Boris Johnson, in partnership with the Royal Borough of Greenwich, has been chosen to take part in the Smart Cities and Communities Lighthouse programme which aims to develop solutions to challenges faced by all major cities as they continue to grow and develop. The programme will see Greenwich used as a testing ground for new technology. Initiatives there include:

■ Trialling 300 smart parking bays that aim to optimise parking spaces and help drivers find a space quickly and conveniently.
■ Testing shared electric bikes to see if these support a shift from private cars, while electric vehicles will be piloted for local deliveries and car sharing.
■ Using the River Thames as a renewable energy source to provide affordable heat to local homes. A heat pump will be used to increase the water temperature before being piped through a heat network for space heating and domestic hot water use in local homes.

Post office to close despite residents' campaign to save it

THE post office in Kensington's Earls Court Road will shut its doors for the last time on January 30 and merge into Kensington Crown Post Office in Kensington High Street – despite a long campaign to try to save it.

The Post Office says the decision was taken following feedback from a 12-week public consultation which ran from last June to September.

Kensington and Chelsea council has opposed the proposals all along and at a public meeting in September organised by ward councillors and attended by top Post Office bosses, angry residents stressed how much they needed the facility.

The PO argues that the development is part of ongoing plans to create a network that is modern, sustainable and profitable.

The improved Kensington

branch will have increased staffing levels which will ensure that staffing hours are closely aligned to changes in customer demand. The branch has already been modernised and improvements included new style self-service kiosks.

Lib Dem councillor Linda Wade said she thought that they "went through the procedure of a consultation but they made up their mind beforehand".

More than 7,000 new homes are being built in the area as part of the Earls Court Exhibition Centre development.

Councillor Wade told a news website: "There are 7,600 new homes being built. Who in their right mind would want to give up their position in the high street in light of the development? It doesn't make sense to me. It's really sad news."



■ **DOOMED:** Earls Court Road post office

LONDON WIDE

Chelsea prepares to spring more surprises as showtime 2016 looms

BY LWN REPORTER
editorial@londonweeklynews.co.uk

IF the gloomy mid-winter days are draining your spirits and you are wondering if spring will ever arrive, remember that the 2016 Chelsea Flower Show is not far off.

For five days this May, the grounds of the Royal Hospital Chelsea will be transformed into the world's greatest flower show. Some of the show-stopping displays promised this year include:

■ Photographic exhibits and a floral arch to celebrate the 90th birthday of the Royal Horticultural Society's patron, the Queen.

■ A 60-foot carriage from Belmond British Pullman, which will form part of the 6,000sq ft planted-up station in the Great Pavilion.

■ The RHS Garden for Health, Happiness and Horticulture, designed by Ann-Marie Powell, and the Modern Apothecary Garden, designed by RHS Ambassador Jekka McVicar.

■ The memorable poppies tribute by Phillip Johnson at the entrance to the show.

■ Horticultural showman Diarmuid Gavin is back with The British Eccentrics Garden, featuring bizarre garden gadgetry that comes to life every 15 minutes

■ An acoustic garden inspired by world-leading percussionist Dame Evelyn Glennie will play musical notes to visitors.

■ Horticultural inspiration from around the world, including Jordan, the Netherlands, Cambodia, Japan, Chile, Australia and more.

Also this year there will be spectacular show gardens, showcasing the exceptional talent of a handful of carefully selected garden designers.

Each illustrates the possibilities of garden design, landscaping and plantsmanship, and collectively they deliver a broad range of design styles and celebrate diverse themes. Alongside the Show Gardens are the smaller garden categories. The Artisan Gardens pay homage to traditional and contemporary artisan skills, and the Fresh Gardens category incorporate innovative materials and challenging ideas.

RHS patron the Queen, will be celebrating her 90th birthday this year and to mark the occasion, many of the Chelsea Flower Show features will include photographic exhibits and a floral arch.

The theme of this year's show will champion the health and wellbeing benefits of greening-up our grey spaces. Features in the RHS Greening Grey Britain Garden for Health, Happiness and Horticulture, designed by leading



■ **BE AMAZED:** More than a splash of colour at last year's Chelsea Flower Show
Pictures: Richard Austin

garden designer and BBC presenter Ann-Marie Powell, will provide ideas for visitors to take home to their own gardens.

Greening Grey Britain is an RHS call to action to get the nation to transform hard, cold grey areas into planted-up beautiful places, to improve lives and help the environment.

This theme is incorporated in several designs at RHS Chelsea

Watch out for full coverage of the RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2016 in the London Weekly News

this year. Chris Beardshaw's collaboration with Morgan Stanley has produced a unique show garden that will be relocated to the heart of Great Ormond Street Hospital after the show as a therapeutic space for parents. Alison Doxey and Stephen Welch have designed The Garden Bed as a green space for hospice patients.

Healthy Gardens, Healthy Gardeners, by Coventry University, will explore how gardening can be a form of

exercise, if undertaken in the correct manner. The interactive feature in the Discovery Zone will show how hard a gardener's muscles are working as he labours.

In the Great Pavilion more than 100 specialist plant breeders, nurseries and societies will create breath-taking floral exhibits with plants at the peak of perfection.

Close by, the winners in the regional heats of RHS Chelsea Florist of the Year, RHS Young Chelsea Florist of the Year, and RHS Chelsea Floristry College of the Year will be crafting glorious floral displays, while outside in the Floral Design Studio members of the National Association of Flower Arrangement Societies will be competing for medals.

Unique products for the garden and home are available to buy throughout the show-ground, including limited edition sculptures and gardening essentials, and in Ranelagh Gardens five artisans have been invited to dress studios in which they will exhibit their handmade crafts.



■ **STAR GARDENER:** Joanna Lumley enjoys the 2015 show

Council will reveal advice on planning

AS part of its commitment to transparency Kensington and Chelsea council says that from March it will routinely publish any advice that planning officers or the Architectural Appraisal Panel has given to an applicant about a development proposal before the application was made.

The council is thought to be the first in the country to open its files in this way. It offers an advice service (www.rbkc.gov.uk/advice) to those who are considering making a planning application. The advice is generally confidential between the council and the customer, but can be published following a request under the Freedom of Information Act or Environmental Information Regulations once a related planning application is made.

Councillor Tim Coleridge, Cabinet Member for Planning Policy, said: "The royal borough is already streets ahead of many other councils in the way it publishes planning application information on its website and this is another step in our commitment to being transparent."

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ROYAL LONDON

£150 for a charity seat at Queen's birthday picnic? That's a bit rich

BY GEOFF BAKER

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ALTHOUGH nobody wishes to spoil the party, queries of cost and security have arisen over The Patron's Lunch, the giant picnic for 10,000 guests which The Queen will host in the Mall on June 12th.

The picnic lunch, which is being organised by Her Majesty's grandson Peter Phillips, to mark her 90th birthday, will be a celebration of The Queen's patronage of more than 600 charities.

When the event was first revealed last summer, most people assumed that, as it was to in part promote charities, it would be free.

However, the organisers have now announced that each charity

will be allocated tickets costing £150 each – that's £125 per ticket plus £25 VAT.

It is understood that each charity will be given 10 tickets and their own table, for which they will have to stump up a total of £1,500.

The remaining 4,000 tickets will be open to the public to try for, by putting their names down for a public ballot which will open next month at www.thepatronslunch.com and will run for four weeks. Again, tickets will cost £150 each.

Fair enough. But is it? And moreover, given the current and foreseeable terror threat, is it wise?

First, the cost.

Picnickers will be paying £1,500 per table of 10. The organisers have indicated that the sponsors and supporters of the lunch – who include Unilever,

Marks and Spencer, drinks giants Diageo and Boots – will be supplying much of the food and drink, which will include Pimms, PG Tips and Walls ice cream.

But according to the calculations of the LWN's Housekeeping Editor, a picnic for 10 need not cost anywhere near £1,500.

We did some sums:

- 1 litre bottle of Pimms - £20
- Packet of PG Tips - £5 for 100 bags
- Family tub of Walls ice cream - £2
- Lemonade [for the Pimms] - 4 bottles for £1.50
- Cucumber sandwiches for 10: 2 cucumbers - £1; 2 sliced loaves - £3; large tub of butter spread - £1.25
- Milk - 4 pints for £1
- Crisps for 10 - £4
- 1 litre of orange squash - £2
- Marks & Sparks triple-layer chocolate cake for 10 - £20



- 1 wicker picnic hamper - £10
 - Paper plates, plastic cups and cutlery, bunting - £5
 - Marks & Sparks teapot - £12
- TOTAL: £87.75**

Which is not quite £1,500.

- One thousand tables of 10 at £150 per seat = £1,500,000.
- One thousand tables of 10 at £87.75 of food and drink per table = £87,750
- £1,500,000 minus £87,750 = £1,412,250.

Were the Patron's Lunch being held for profit, which it is not, £1.4 million left after paying for the food and drink would indicate a handy return.

However, organisers also have to take into account the cost of catering staff – somebody has to make 40,000 sarnies – and other costs.

One such vast cost is expected to be that of policing the lunch. Given the perilous state

■ BIRTHDAY: The Queen will celebrate in Pall Mall

of the risk of a terrorist attack at such a high-profile event – The Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry are among the royals who will be present – a large number of Metropolitan Police will be needed. And as the event is to be held on a Sunday, that means officers will need paying overtime rates.

However, a possible headache for the security forces could come from reports that, having received their allocation of tickets, the 600 organisations invited “are being allowed to sell on 40 per cent of their allocation at a profit to cover costs”.

That a potential 1,200 tickets could go on the open market and therefore become available to anybody has raised eyebrows. And that is in addition to concerns that may arise from 4,000 of the tickets for the lunch also being offered for sale through the public ballot.

Therefore, in addition to the cost of policing the lunch on the day there will also be the vast cost and complexity of the Met having to vet and background check 10,000 people, of whom as many as 5,200 may have nothing to do with any of The Queen's charities.

One other concern has arisen. The Treasury stands to pocket £250,000 from The Patron's Lunch in VAT. Given that the event in [a] about The Queen's lifelong support of charities and [b] is meant to be about the nation celebrating her remarkable 90 years, one might think that under the circumstances Chancellor George Osborne might want to waive the VAT contributions.

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Where to see a royal this week

FULL details of future and recent events in the ever-busy diaries of the many members of the Royal Family are available from the official website www.royal.gov.uk but here's the schedule for the week ahead for Where To See A Royal.

January 27

■ The Prince of Wales will attend a reception to mark the 40th anniversary of the Foundation of The Anglo-

Omani Society, Lancaster House.

■ The Duchess of Cornwall will visit national charity SafeLives, The Foundry, 17 Oval Way.

■ The Earl of Wessex, as Royal Honorary Colonel, will attend The London Regiment Cocktail Party, Cutler's Hall, 4 Warwick Lane EC4.

January 28

■ The Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall will visit Wilton's Music Hall, Graces Alley.

February 1

■ The Earl of Wessex, as Trustee, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, will hold a Diamond Supporters' Reception to be staged at St James's Palace.

February 2

■ The Earl of Wessex, as Trustee, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, will hold Receptions at St James's Palace for young people who have reached the Gold Standard in the Award.

ROYAL LONDON

Her majesty's about to star in a new film (in which she will marry Dr Who)

BY GEOFF BAKER
geoff@londonweeklynews.co.uk

JUST when she must have felt that she had done pretty much everything during her reign, now The Queen has learned that she is to be the star of her own *Downton Abbey*, a blockbuster TV drama that will run and run for six years.

The Crown, the royal epic will start this year, will be like no royal drama ever before it – 60 hour-long episodes will be screened before it is done, at a cost said to be way over £100 million.

Her Majesty, known to be a *Downton* fan, will take centre stage of the drama that tells the behind the scenes story of the long history of her reign. And as it is being written by Peter Morgan, who created *The Queen* movie that won Dame Helen Mirren an Oscar, it will be gripping stuff that is bound to become top of the TV ratings as millions eagerly follow every episode.

ITV and BBC executives are now competing to buy the UK rights to the Netflix production, aiming to out-bid each other for



■ ROYAL ROLE: Claire Foy shares a striking resemblance with the young Queen Elizabeth.

the drama that is certain to be set for *Downton*'s Sunday night prime time slot.

The epic – which has already been dubbed *Crown-ton Abbey* –

will star English actress Claire Foy as *The Queen*. Foy, who transforms herself into a remarkable lookalike of The Queen, takes the royal role from

when the young Princess Elizabeth falls for Prince Philip, who is played by *Doctor Who* Matt Smith.

Foy won much acclaim last

year when she starred as another queen, Anne Boleyn, in the BBC's *Wolf Hall*. The Stockport-born actor, who also played Amy in *Little Dorrit* and opposite Dame Maggie Smith in *The Lady In The Van*, is renowned for not wanting to be a Hollywood idol.

"I'm never going to be a film star and I'm not chasing it, I'm very happy playing interesting parts," she said recently.

But she had better get used to preparing for stardom because *The Crown* is expected to be sold by Netflix to every major TV territory in the world.

"With The Queen celebrating her 90th birthday this year, *The Crown* will crown a massive amount of programmes dedicated to Her Majesty which will make her one of the biggest TV stars of the decade," said a TV insider.

"There is a huge variety of programming coming up on The Queen this year, she will be everywhere you look."

ITV and the BBC are currently working on their own two-hour documentaries which will chart The Queen's nine decades.

In addition, ITV will be screening coverage of birthday celebrations at Windsor which will be presented as a glorious

pageant around her love of horses.

There is also a spoof royal soap opera, *The Windsors*, starting on Channel 4, another documentary planned to profile Prince Philip in his 95th year, and the BBC has just announced plans for a whole weekend of coverage of Her Majesty at 90 this summer.

The BBC1 weekend of birthday celebrations for the landmark anniversary begins on Friday, June 10 with a service of thanksgiving at St Paul's Cathedral, and the traditional display of pageantry of the Queen's Birthday Parade and Trooping the Colour will be held on Saturday, June 11 on Horse Guards Parade, culminating with the Royal Family making their annual appearance on the balcony of Buckingham Palace.

BBC1 will also broadcast a special celebration on The Mall in St James's Park taking place on Sunday, June 12.

Phil Dolling, BBC Head of Events Production, said: "We are thrilled to be broadcasting three days of events in June to mark Her Majesty's 90th Birthday. It promises to be a fantastic weekend. It is a very significant birthday for the Queen and BBC One will be right at the heart of the celebrations."

Royals ring the changes in palace shops

FOLLOWING the craze of young parents who rush to buy anything worn by Prince George and his baby sister, Kensington Palace is cashing in on the fervid following with its own tongue-in-cheek Princess Charlotte range of playthings for little girls.

Usually the goods on sale at the Palace gift shop run by the Prince of Wales are not ascribed to any particular royal, writes Geoff Baker.

The men's leather gardening gloves [£12.99]; for instance, are not marketed as 'Grandad Charlie's gardening gloves' and the Crown enamel cuff-links [£17.99] are not sales-pitched as 'Wills-Effect cuff-links'.

But now that Prince George's outfits have started driving huge sales for the stylish under-threes, the royals have humorously launched the Princess Charlotte collection.

The sales power of Prince George was recently revealed when online parenting forums were filled with mums trying to buy the padded navy jacket that he wore on his first day at preschool.

No sooner had pictures of George in his smart coat done the rounds on the Net than par-



■ TREND-SETTERS: George and Charlotte.

quilted, hooded jacket in navy," said a spokesman for the department stores.

Now prepare for a similar must-have rush to the Kensington Palace online gift shop – or the Historic Royal Palaces Shop, as it is properly called – from mums wanting to kit out their daughters in the Duchess of Cambridge's choice.

Given that the tiny princess is

less than nine months old, and therefore is somewhat unlikely to be dressing up yet, the palace's royal residents – Charles and Camilla, William and Kate and Harry – are showing some humour in their approved selection, which indicates that they don't take being shopkeepers entirely seriously.

Nevertheless, the Princess Charlotte range has now become available.

There's the Princess Charlotte toy tiara for £3.99, the Princess Charlotte dolly for £17.99 and the Princess Charlotte dressing-up kit for £35.

And who, among all those of us who did not know that she even used one, could resist the Princess Charlotte purple feather fan, at £9.99?

The Historic Royal Palaces Shops – there are others at Buckingham Palace and Windsor Palace – were set up by The Queen in 1993 and are run as a charity under the chairmanship of Prince Charles.

Although some people might sniffily question why the royals have gone "into trade" by opening their emporiums of souvenirs, it's not tat and just now there are bargains to be had if you have a plump wallet.

For instance, couples wanting to give that special touch to a long relationship can now turn

to the royal Ratners to buy an exclusive eternity ring made with gold dug out of the Royal Family's own mine.

For £2,800, romantics can purchase the Tree of Life eternity ring, one of almost 400 items of jewellery available from Kensington Palace's shop.

"This is a remarkable piece of jewellery, beautifully depicting the ever-evolving nature of life through an intricate design of rose gold berries and vines," said a spokesman for Historic Royal Palaces, the charity that runs the shop.

"It is inspired by the natural beauty of Wales and reminiscent of the striking filigree detail on the golden gates at Kensington Palace, the Tree of Life ring is a piece to treasure forever."

Running along the entirety of each ring is an 18ct yellow gold band set with 30-35 brilliant cut diamonds. The band is surrounded by a rose gold filigree design.

"Each ring also contains a touch of rare Welsh gold from the same mine that has been used by the Royal family since 1923 to create generations of Royal Family wedding rings, including Her Majesty the Queen, Diana Princess of Wales and the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge," said the spokesman.

Of the 384 items of jewellery now on sale at the online Kens-

ington market – which has a huge selection of tiaras, rings, necklaces, earrings, brooches and cuff-links – there are currently big bargains.

Like other shops at this time of the year, the royal store has slashed prices on selected items and in some cases halved them.

Yours for a steal – £800, reduced from £1,600 – is a royal rose pendant, set in rose gold with 94 diamonds to represent the royal flower of England, and a further bargain can be had with the royal rose ring, last year £1,500 but now just £750.

And for Barbie fans, the palace shop is also offering dolls of each of Henry VIII's wives, £1,115 for the set or £200 apiece, and a Princess Anne doll at the knock-down price of £6.99. For those who wish to go out done-up like The Queen, there's also the replica Queen Elizabeth II Coronation earrings for £40 a pair, matched with a copy of Her Majesty's Coronation necklace for £150.

Touchingly, the royal gemsmiths at Kensington Palace also honour the late Princess Diana. The Princess Diana pendant [£29.99] and earrings [£14.99] are available, both shaped in replica style of the 18-carat sapphire and diamond ring given to her on their engagement by Prince Charles and then given to Catherine by William.

Capital nights

EDITED BY GEOFF BAKER

AFTER five years of been absolutely rubbish at the job, the BBC's Eurovision team has finally quit attempting to pick a British winner.

Following humiliation after humiliation, the BBC is axing the internal selection process that gave us the red-faced embarrassment of Electro Velvet coming 24th out of 27 last year, Molly Smitten-Downes managing only 17th the year before, Bonnie Tyler coming 19th in 2013, Engelbert Humperdinck scraping in at second to last in 2012 and even pop band Blue only managing 11th place the year before that.

And let's not dwell on the great idea of having Pete Waterman write the UK entry in 2010, only to see his *That Sounds Good To Me*, performed by Josh Dubovie [no, me neither] ending up sounding good to none of the judging panels, who placed it last.

Now the BBC has decided that perhaps people who actually buy pop songs may be the better judge of what's popular and is turning the task of choosing the UK entry over to the public. Or, as the BBC put it in an announcement, "for the first time in six years, a televised national selection show will be airing this spring, where the public will choose the song and act that will represent the UK at this year's contest in Sweden. *Eurovision: You Decide* will be broadcast live on Friday, February 26 on BBC Four, where six shortlisted acts will take to the stage in a bid to impress the viewers at home and a professional panel in the venue as they all compete for the honour of representing the United Kingdom at Eurovision 2016."

But before we all start whooping for joy in anticipation of a UK win in Stockholm repeating Lulu's *Boom Bang A Bang* success back in the 17th century, already the move to wash the BBC's hands of making the decision is causing controversy.

Members of the British Eurovision fan club have complained that by hiding away *Eurovision: You Decide* on BBC Four, the little-watched channel which is the broadcasting

Is there any point in trying for Euro glory?

■ EASTERN PROMISE: Armenian Eurovision hopeful Iveta Mukuchyan

equivalent of Electro Velvet's following, the BBC is hardly giving the public vote much of a fighting chance. In fact, in terms of the likelihood of capturing the attention of the nation, BBC Four is something of a nul pointer. According to the official TV ratings tables, in the week ending January 10, the best audience that BBC Four could muster was the 1.09 million who made its Italian series *The Young Montalbano* the channel's most-popular programme of the week.

We shudder to think what manner of miniscule audience watched BBC

Four's least-popular programme that week, but an indication of its microscopic size comes from the fact that Four's fourth-best programme, *Empire Of The Tsars*, had a viewership of only 630,000.

Eurovision fans are arguing, probably rightly, that in order to get an accurate poll of what UK song might work well in the song contest, *You Decide* should be aired on a much-watched channel like BBC One and not buried in a place where it's pretty much up to three men and a cat to make their minds up on behalf of the whole of Britain.

The BBC, of course, thinks differently. In a statement which puts him in contention to be made the next patron saint of optimism, Cassian Harrison, Editor of BBC Four, says: "I'm delighted that *Eurovision: You Decide* and both of the semi finals are coming to the channel this year. BBC Four is the home of music on TV in the UK, and as any fan will tell you, Eurovision is one of the biggest music events on the planet and is much more than just one night of TV, therefore it is only right that BBC Four is able to showcase Europe's favourite music TV event right here in the UK."

Hmmm.

However, there is another problem with this *You Decide* business, which Eurovision fans have also been quick to point out on their vastly-entertaining website – is the British public any great judge of a Eurovision winner either?

Before the BBC introduced its "internal selection" process, we had a viewers' choice system which threw up two of the worst UK efforts ever – Jemini's risible *Cry Baby*, which achieved the distinction of becoming Britain's first-ever nul points in 2003, and the ill-making *Flying The Flag For You* by Scooch, which came in at 22nd place out of 24.

As many have argued during the 60 years of Eurovision, quite how the nation that has led the world in popular music frequently seems to lose all sense of judgement, if not its total sense of hearing, when it comes to the Song Contest is beyond us, but perhaps we should just throw in the towel and go for the novelty act – like the Germans may be doing this year.

Among the acts vying to be selected to represent Germany is a Gregorian chanting choir. Excellent, was that catchy Stockhausen not available? Although before we laugh it must be noted that the 'band', snappily-titled Gregorian, has had 15 hit CDs and is soon embarking on a four-month world tour. So we may be foot-tapping to some winning wailing psalmody in Stockholm yet.

However, our money is already going on the model and singer-songwriter Iveta Mukuchyan, the Armenian entry who has the glamour and the Joss Stone-like voice to win it, if her selected song is any good.

WITH new *Top Gear* host Chris Evans getting car sick recently while filming the BBC's motoring show, ITV rivals may soon make him feel more queasy – with its new car show which puts even more celebrities at the wheel.

ITV has commissioned *Drive*, an entertainment series which features the thrills and spills of motor racing and pitches eight well known celebrities against each other "in an adrenaline charged race with a difference".

Drive is hosted by Vernon Kay with UK racing legend and double British Touring Car Champion Jason Plato on hand with his expert advice.

Celebrities taking to the tracks are: rapper Professor Green; singer Ella Eyre; X-Factor's Louis Walsh; comedian Jonny Vegas; Olympic athlete Colin Jackson; TV presenter Mariella Frostrup; weather expert Laura Tobin and broadcaster Angus Deayton.

"This high-octane driving competition will see the celebrities take to the driving seats of old bangers, buggies, 4x4s and rally cross cars among others. As they get into pole position, we will see who has what it takes in a host of unexpected and action packed driving challenges," says ITV.

"The celebrities with the slowest time in each challenge will battle it out in a Night Race to see who will remain in the competition. And those that remain by the Final will burn up the tracks in a F4 car in a bid to be crowned the Drive Champion."

Vernon said: "Everyone thinks they can drive – but can they? This show will test not only their skills behind the wheel but also how they control their fear. *Drive* is not just about straight line speed, all driving skills are going to be tested. But when it's not your clutch you're burning or your tyres you're shredding, it's full steam ahead."

Jason said: "I'm interested to see what these celebrities can do behind the steering wheel. There is a massive difference from driving a car on the road to taking something to the race track and it will be interesting to see who has what it takes to take their foot off the brake and test their limits."

■ DRIVING FORCE:
Vernon Kay



Friends reunited

THEY'RE back! After 13 years off the screen the cast of *Cold Feet* were reunited in London last week for the read-through for their comeback.

The cast of BAFTA winning drama – James Nesbitt, Robert Bathurst, Hermione Norris, John Thomson, and Fay Ripley – have started work on the new series which will begin filming next month.

The nation's love affair with *Cold Feet* began in 1997 when the television audience was first introduced to friends Adam and Rachel, Pete and Jenny, Karen and David. Thirty-three episodes and five series later the couples left the screen

amid all sorts of marital problems.

James Nesbitt, back as Adam, said: "*Cold Feet* was such a big part of my life. I can't wait to see all my old friends and find out if Adam is still as big an eejit as I still am."

Fay Ripley added: "Revisiting Jenny feels a bit like bumping into an old friend. Getting to know her again is going to be a laugh. I just hope that by the time I finish filming I don't want to delete her number!"

ITV says in the new series "many questions will be answered" – how has Adam coped without his soulmate, Rachel, raising their son, Matthew, on his own? Do Pete and Jenny still



■ FANCY THAT: *Cold Feet*

spend their evenings on the sofa, in domestic bliss? And what of David and Karen who had split up. With three children between them, are the ties that bind them still strong?

The creator of *Cold Feet*, Mike

Bullen, said: "This feels like the right time to revisit these characters, as they tip-toe through the minefield of middle age. They're 50, but still feel 30, apart from on the morning after the night before, when they really feel their age."



EDITED BY GEOFF BAKER

AS talk of boycotting the Oscars grows after the disgraceful situation that only white actors have been nominated for the actor categories in the Academy Awards, the BBC is taking big steps to re-tell and re-balance the story of the long importance of diversity in Britain.

The acclaimed historian and broadcaster David Olusoga has been signed to write and present *A Black History Of Britain*, which will present a fresh approach to our past and will, says the BBC, “demonstrate how black history has shaped our world and put BBC Two at the heart of a moment of national historical reassessment.”

Drawing on new genetic and genealogical research, original records, expert testimony and contemporary interviews, Olusoga will build a “dazzlingly different national narrative” filmed in the UK, Africa, the Caribbean and the USA.

“We will learn of the African soldiers who guarded Hadrian’s Wall in the third century AD, the black sailors who fought under Nelson at Trafalgar, Queen Victoria’s African goddaughter and the Lancashire cotton workers who supported the abolition of American slavery even when doing so put them on the bread line,” said a BBC spokesman.

“This is a history full of surprises, scandal and contradictions. It will be bristling with emotion, discomforting facts and controversy.”

“The series will confront taboo subjects that are rarely explored – revealing how the Stuart kings were among Britain’s first big slave traders, and confronting the fact that many African kingdoms grew rich by trading in slaves.”

Olusoga’s re-telling of our history will be a rich and revealing exploration of the extraordinarily long relationship between the British Isles and the people of Africa. Reaching as far back as Roman Britain, the historian reveals that black British history is an epic, sweeping story that in many ways touches us all.

In the four films, over 20 specially designed BBC Black History plaques will be unveiled at locations across Britain, former colonies and the Commonwealth. The plaques will record and celebrate people and events that are pivotal to this new

history, providing enduring symbols of the series.

The BBC is working with Black Cultural Archives to encourage further research to uncover, preserve and celebrate the history of African and Caribbean people in Britain. The BBC’s *Black History of Britain* team is also working with a range of heritage organisations with a view to helping community groups to uncover more chapters in black British history across the UK.

Olusoga said: “This series will unveil a new type of black British history, because to me black history is everyone’s history. It’s the long, often tragic and always surprising story of Britain’s relationship with Africa and her peoples.

“It’s a history that takes place here in Britain but also in Africa and across the Caribbean and North America, and most of it is little known. But it’s also the story of those

Historian redresses balance

periods in our past when the rights, status and humanity of black people were among the big issues of the day, issues that helped shape the whole country and the empire.”

Kim Shillinglaw, Controller of BBC Two and BBC Four, said: “BBC Two has a special role to play in showing inspiring and informative television that no-one else would make. This important series will tell a new story of Britain, bringing to light tales that have never been told before and changing the way we all see our national story. Following the success of last year’s *Britain’s Forgotten Slave Owners*, I’m delighted that David Olusoga is working again with BBC Two on a subject no one else has ever attempted before at this scale for TV – with ambition, journalistic revelation and proper insight.”

Paul Reid, Director of Black Cultural Archives, said: “Our mission is to collect, preserve and celebrate the histories of African and



■ AMBITIOUS: David Olusoga will confront difficult issues

Caribbean people in Britain. This exciting series will uncover the less-known historical narratives, providing an insight into the Black presence in Britain and documenting the richness of British history.”

With an exploration of the medieval imagination, the Domesday book, as well as Shakespeare’s *Othello* and his eulogy to black female beauty, Olusoga will find out how the lives of black and white Britons have been intimately entwined for centuries.

After the screenings, viewers will be invited to research and nominate

further people and events for addition to a Black History Trail. More plaques will be unveiled, forming a unique heritage trail and a lasting legacy for the series.

The BBC added: “The series will sit alongside other programmes, to be announced, whose shared theme will be to uncover lost, distorted or forgotten stories of Black Britons and the Black British experience. The range of bold and vibrant stories will cast fresh light on historical and contemporary Black British life, celebrating the fact that we are telling stories not made public before.”

WITH tickets for Adele’s shows at the O2 changing hands at £4,000 there’s hope yet for fans desperate to see their idol at any of her eight dates there in March.

Fans have been upset that touts are asking up to 20 times the face value for tickets for Adele’s first tour in for years, but the advice from music business insiders is “don’t give up hope yet”.

“Even when a show is reported to be completely sold out, the promoters will always keep tickets back because they don’t know exactly how full the gig will be until they load in the stage,” said one touring veteran.

“For an arena the size of the O2 it would be quite usual to keep back at least 500 tickets per show and these would be released for sale either the day before or on the day of the show.”

But there’s one proviso.

“Just how many last-minute seats are available rather depends on the number of VIPs who want tickets and traditionally they are always the last ones to declare that they want to see the show. In Adele’s case that might not be good news for the fans, because everybody who is anybody wants to see the gig.”



■ IN DEMAND: Everyone wants to see Adele in concert



■ ED FACTOR: The Troubadour in the Old Brompton Road has nurtured the talents of many up and coming performers, including Ed Sheeran

LOOKING for the next Ed Sheeran? Then go no further than back to The Troubadour in the Old Brompton Road, where the cherished venue that helped break Jimi Hendrix, Bob Dylan and Paul Simon is still brilliantly doing its bit to bring on the stars of tomorrow.

After facing closure last year, the revitalised Troubadour is leading London with its showcasing of new talents through regular slots including New Band Saturday every weekend, the weekly Songwriters’ Showcase and, on the first Sunday of every month, London Guitar Night.

This month’s Guitar Night falls on February 7 and will be presented as usual by guitarist Chris Woods.

“The plan is simple,” says Woods. “Bring together the best touring guitarists and musicians with local six string legends in a stunning London venue.”

“The event has become a hub for all things guitar and has hosted some great musicians of all different genres. Guitar is the focal point that pulls everything together, and that’s what makes it so varied. From jazz trios to singer-songwriters, virtuoso instrumental guitarists to minimalist guitar orchestras, the London Guitar Night has had it all.”

Ukulele champion makes his Mark

FULHAM-BASED ukulele master John Atkins is heading for the big time after teaming up with top producer Mark Ronson to record a new cover of the huge hit *Uptown Funk*.

Ronson gave John and five other fans the surprise of a lifetime when he invited them to record the new track at Abbey Road studios.

Three years ago, John started filming monthly ukulele lessons on his phone in his bedroom, as a joke for a friend. Today he creates two lessons a week, occasional cover versions, and has over 220,000 subscribers to his YouTube channel.

Now, as part of MasterCard’s ‘Priceless Surprises’ campaign for the BRIT Awards 2016, he has been selected by Ronson to be part of his new superfan group, put together after the producer selected the musicians from their YouTube cover videos.

The group were under the impression that they would be recording their version of the track, which was the biggest selling song of 2015, for a documentary about Ronson. However, when they arrived at the studio, Ronson appeared to produce the cover.

“It was such a great experience to bring together six very unique talents and produce this new cover of our song.”

“I’m always affected by the fact that talented musicians and singers would take the time to figure out my songs and then post their own interpretations, and I really lucked out with the group,” said Ronson, who has been nominated for British Male Solo Artist and British Producer of the Year for the BRIT Awards on February 24 at The O2.

The new track can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/wMsrFzQbKhA>



■ INNOVATOR: Mark Ronson and friends at Abbey Road

LWN

News for Westminster, Chelsea, Hammersmith, Shepherds Bush and Fulham

This monthly column is produced by Peter Faulkner of Who Can You Trust organisation and sponsored by **Checkatrade.com** Peter can be contacted on 07958-475392 or email peterfau67@gmail.com

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Romance at a price

By Peter Faulkner

NEXT month is Valentine's Day when thousands of romantics in West London, young and old, will celebrate and pledge their love for each other.

It is a tradition started by a Christian martyr in the 5th Century. But I received a call last week from a woman in Westminster that suggests the crooks are trying to use romance to swindle you out of money.

The woman, who only have her first name as Lucy, had received a phone call from someone saying he was from a company called: Express Couriers and asked if she was going to be home because there was a package that needed her signature.

He said said that the delivery would arrive at her home in about an hour and she was confronted by a uniformed delivery man with a beautiful basket of flowers and a bottle of wine.

The woman, in her fifties, was very surprised since there was no special occasion or holiday, and she was not expecting a delivery.

That's when things became rather sinister. "Intrigued, I inquired as to who the sender was," said the woman.

"The courier said he didn't know as he was only delivering the package."

"He said a card was being sent separately and there was also a consignment note with the gift."

"He then went on to explain that

because the gift contained alcohol, there was a £3.50 delivery and verification charge providing proof that he had actually delivered the package to an adult of legal drinking age and not just left it on the doorstep where it could be stolen

"This sounded logical and I offered to pay him cash. He then said that the delivery company required payment to be by credit or debit card only, so that everything is properly accounted for, and this would help in keeping a legal record of the transaction.

"He added couriers don't carry cash to avoid loss and would make them likely targets for robbery.

"My husband Frank, who was standing beside me, pulled out his credit card and the delivery man asked him to swipe the card on a small mobile card machine with a small screen and keypad.

"My husband, was asked to enter his PIN number and a receipt was printed out. He was given a copy of the transaction. The guy said everything was in order and left.

"To our horror the following Monday, £4,000 had been withdrawn from our account at various ATM machines.

"Apparently the mobile credit card machine now had all the info necessary to create a dummy card with all our card details including the PIN number.

"We immediately notified the bank which issued us a new card, and our account was closed.

"We also personally went to the



A romantic gesture being touted by criminals

Police, where it was confirmed that it is definitely a scam because several households had been similarly hit."

WARNING: Be wary of accepting any surprise gift or package which you are not expecting or didn't order.

Diamond selling company loses its sparkle with the Insolvency Service

■ A CITY-based company that offered investments in carbon credits and diamonds has been shut down by the High Court after an investigation by the Insolvency Service.

Mulberry Wynford of John Street, claimed to be a global business with over 150 years' combined industry experience offering the most beneficial investment products and services.

They claimed to have offices in New York, Hong

Kong and Dubai, but only had a limited mail forwarding services at its London office with two directors Michael Bashir and Andreas Christodoulou.

According to the Insolvency Service, the company's terms and conditions required investors who wanted to dispose of their investments to request this in writing.

However, any requests were incapable of being delivered as the company did not maintain ade-

quate registered office arrangements to receive mail addressed to the company. The extent of the overall investor losses is presently undetermined.

Chris Mayhew, company investigations supervisor at the Insolvency Service, said the carbon credits were ostensibly bought for £300 but Mulberry Wynford specialised in delivering misery to vulnerable investors both here and abroad who were taken in by its lies.

Amazon call is just a scam

■ HAD a call just before Christmas allegedly from Amazon saying that my 55in television was being delivered today. I was surprised because I had nothing on order and suggested to the caller that this was a scam.

Someone claiming to be the Amazon supervisor called back to say they would put me through to the bank fraud squad and I was put through within seconds.

It was then I realised this was a scam because the person at the other end asked for my bank details. I refused and they hung up.

When I contacted Amazon they said they had no record of any order and this seemed like a scam.

The threats you face in 2016

■ AN Inaugural National Trading Standards 'Consumer Harm Report' reveals predicts the biggest threats for 2016 include energy, lottery and telephone preference scams.

National Trading Standards (NTS) teams prevented £252m worth of loss to consumers and businesses in the last year, prevented more than 2.5m unsafe or non-compliant goods from entering the supply chain through our borders and convicted 100 criminals who are now serving a total of 118 years of prison time.

The figures are revealed in NTS' first ever Consumer Harm Report, which also shows that a total of £385,000 was returned to scam victims.

Sadly though, identified victims of mail scams lost over £13m over the same period and 200,000 people now appear on so-called 'suckers lists'.

Councils team up to tackle fraud

■ A NEW anti-fraud initiative has been launched in London to crack down on fraud in the Capital and save London boroughs millions of pounds each year.

All 32 London boroughs and the City of London have worked together to set up the new scheme, which will analyse data to identify fraud committed against all local government departments.

The London Counter Fraud Hub will also help recover funds on behalf of local councils.

Edward Lord, chair of the Capital Ambition board, said: "This has the potential to save local authorities significant sums of money and could prove a very good investment in the fight against fraud."

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become stronger they need the right nutrients to grow. Ingredients including glutamine, taurine and manganese gives muscles the necessary fuel they need to recover and repair allowing them to stay strong and flexible for you.

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WINE & DINE

The food and
drink page for
West London

THERE is no sugar-coating the fact that sugar consumption is having a massive impact on our waistlines, teeth, moods and overall health and wellbeing.

From reports that slashing the amount of sugar in sweetened drinks by 40 per cent could prevent 300,000 cases of Type 2 diabetes, to news that the average five-year-old consumes the equivalent of their own body weight in sugar in a year, reducing the white stuff has become something of a national priority.

Yet while many are painfully aware of the destructive influence of sugar (that'll be the 3pm grumps, ageing skin and bingo wings then), it doesn't help that: A, sugar is added to lots of food and drinks, even unsuspecting savoury products; B, sugar is embedded in our daily diets (hello, mid-morning biscuits with a cuppa), and C, it tastes nice.

Here to help is cookery writer Susanna Booth, who used her polymer chemistry degree to create sugar-free goodies that don't sacrifice taste, sweetly displayed in her new recipe book, *Sensationally Sugar Free*.

But with sugar playing "quite a big role in a lot of baking", the challenge was to find a way of adding texture and crunch - which sugar provides - as well as sweetness.

So far, Booth's recipes (in which she uses apple puree, sweeteners like stevia and naturally sweet fruits) have been well received by her friends and family.

The key, she says, is to accept that sugar-free desserts will taste different to sugar-laden versions of the same dish.

"If you put my carrot cake next to another carrot cake that was made with sugar, you would notice how much less sweet it is," says Booth. "But actually, most of the time, you don't really want loads of sweetness. In a way, I think you just become accustomed to it."

Although many of us habitually eat sweetened food, there are some things to keep in mind if you want to reduce the amount of sugar you use in baking.



■ LOOKS GOOD: Chocolate Tea Cake with no added sugar.



■ SUSANNA BOOTH has used her knowledge of chemistry to help create a sugar-free baking book.

Sweetening the sugar-free deal

"Think about that sugar hit," explains Booth, who often uses fruit as a topping for cakes.

"If you make a Madeira cake and cut out pretty much all the sugars and use apple puree or whatever instead, it would be disgusting. It would just be like having a loaf of bread.

"It just will not be what you're looking for mentally. You have to think about the proportion of things. If you have a sweet topping like whipped cream, you get that nice mouthful and feel like you've got something luxurious. You can sweeten the cake mixture very little and still feel like you've got that thing."

Although not completely sugar-free, Booth "cooks from scratch", so she can keep track of how much sugar she and her family eat.

"I think it's better to try and reduce as much as you can," she says.

"Any step is a step in the right direction because I think, as a population, we are eating too much sugar. Everyone is saying that now and more negative health effects are being found, so I hope that people find it helpful to try baking in a new way."

If you'd like to give Booth's method a whirl, here's a recipe from *Sensationally Sugar Free* to try at home...

● CHOCOLATE TEA CAKE

(Makes about 12 slices)

1 Earl Grey teabag
110g pitted dried dates
75g wholemeal plain flour
25g cocoa powder
100g unsalted butter, very soft, plus extra for greasing

2 eggs
2tsp baking powder
Pinch of ground cloves
Pinch of salt
50g no-added-sugar plain dark chocolate, plus extra for decorating

Use the teabag to make a pot of tea, using about 150ml boiling water and leaving it to brew for five minutes. Pour off the tea into a measuring jug, then soak the dates in 125ml of the tea for at least four hours or overnight, reserving the remaining tea for the ganache.

When the dates are softened and have absorbed most of the tea, preheat the oven to 180C/160C fan/Gas mark 4. Lightly grease a 22 x 11 x 7cm/1kg loaf tin with a little butter.

Place the soaked dates, and the tea they were soaking in, in a food processor and process until smooth. Add the flour, cocoa powder, butter, eggs, baking powder, cloves and salt and process for three to four seconds, until everything has combined.

Scoop the cake mixture into the tin and smooth the top with a spatula. Bake for 30 minutes until well-risen and an inserted skewer comes out clean. Leave to cool in the tin before removing and placing on a serving plate.

Meanwhile, make the ganache. Break up the chocolate into small pieces and place in a small saucepan with the reserved tea over a low heat until the chocolate has melted, then stir well. Pour into a bowl and chill in the refrigerator for 30 minutes until the mixture has set. Spread it on the cooled cake. Use a vegetable peeler to create curls of chocolate and sprinkle over the top of the ganache to decorate. Eat within two to three days.



MARK HIX'S RECIPE OF THE WEEK

Prawns with pink grapefruit and coriander

Serves four

You need to find the best - and obviously freshest - prawns possible for this dish. For me, deep-red-shelled carabineros, the highly prized Spanish prawns, are one of the best to use, but the problem is trying to find a fishmonger who stocks them. Fresh prawns from British waters will also work really well, or just ask your fishmonger to source the freshest sea water prawns possible.

15-20 good quality, very fresh medium to large prawns, shelled and with the heads removed
1 small grapefruit, peeled, segmented and any excess juice squeezed and saved
1-2 medium-sized red or green chillies, stems removed and flesh finely chopped
1-2tbsp chopped coriander
Sea salt and freshly ground white pepper

Cut the prawns in half lengthways along the back, removing the dark vein if necessary. Give them a quick rinse and dry with kitchen towel. Chop each grapefruit segment into 4-5 pieces and mix with the chilli, coriander and seasoning.

To serve, stir the prawns into the grapefruit mixture and leave for a minute for the flavours to soak in. Arrange the prawns on serving plates and spoon the juice over the top.



■ STIR YOUR SENSES: Mark's prawns with pink grapefruit.

Talk of the town

BY NICKY SWEETLAND

Guys and Dolls
Savoy Theatre ****

THE revival of the classic musical *Guys and Dolls* has enjoyed roaring success at the Chichester Festival Theatre and so a West End transfer was almost inevitable, writes Nicky Sweetland.

Gordon Greenburg's production has taken up residency in the beautifully traditional Savoy Theatre, a venue which, with its gloriously opulent proscenium arch, has proved to be the perfect setting for the more pastiche shows in recent years, most notably the highly acclaimed *Gypsy*, which starred Imelda Staunton.

Guys and Dolls is a musical which has been doing the rounds on the amateur circuit for many years and as such, I was interested to see how this revival would be different.

Set in 1920s New York, the story follows a gang of friendly gamblers as they search for a quick buck, love and eventually redemption.

Made famous by the 1955 film which starred Marlon Brando and Frank Sinatra, *Guys and Dolls* is a proper old-fashioned Broadway-style musical, with the perfect mix of glitz, glamour and great tunes.

A much more 'dancey' version than I've seen before, this production makes the very most of the classic ensemble numbers *Luck Be A Lady* and *Havana* and leads audiences to enjoy the story effortlessly and with less confusion than in previous incarnations.

Lead by the charismatic Jamie Parker, who plays Sky Masterson, the cast is filled with stand-out performances from seasoned actors with sublime vocals. Parker, who will play the leading role of Harry



■ SPECTACULAR: *Guys and Dolls* at the West End's Savoy Theatre

Picture: Paul Coltas

Shades of jazz genius Holiday

TONY, Grammy and Emmy award-winner Audra McDonald will make her long awaited West End debut this summer portraying legendary jazz singer Billie Holiday in the musical play *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill*.

This critically acclaimed production will play a limited engagement at the West End's Wyndham's Theatre from June 25 to September 3, having broken box office records at the Circle in the Square in New York in a run that netted McDonald her record-setting sixth Tony Award.

Written by Lanie Robertson and directed by Lonny Price, *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill* recounts Holiday's life story through the songs that made her famous, including *God Bless the Child*, *What a Little Moonlight Can Do*, *Strange Fruit* and *Taint Nobody's Business*.

Right song and dance!

Potter on stage later in the year, is a strong and smooth Sky and when teamed with Siubhan Harrison's Sarah Brown, the pair cut a dash with their tempestuous love story.

The comedy elements are expertly provided by Sophie Thompson, whose vocal gymnastics as the mucus filled showgirl Adelaide are simply exquisite.

Thompson really stole the show for me, with impeccable

timing and a wonderful rapport with co-star David Haig. Haig plays the lovably crooked Nathan Detroit with charm and appeal and his scenes with Nicely Nicely (Gavin Spokes) and Benny (Ian Hughes) provide an injection of pace to the otherwise dawdling dialogue.

Well worth a visit, *Guys and Dolls* runs at the Savoy Theatre until March 12. For more details visit the show's website guysanddollsthemusical.co.uk



■ GOOD TIMES: Sophie Thompson (Miss Adelaide) and the cast of *Guys and Dolls*, above. Right: Gavin Spokes (Nicely Nicely Johnson) and Ian Hughes (Benny Southstreet) Pictures: Paul Coltas





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Talk of the town

Hateley's moving mixture of power and melancholy

Linzi Hateley Crazy Coqs

THE exquisitely mellow Crazy Coqs is gaining a reputation for hosting excellent cabaret evenings performed by some of the West End's most legendary stars and last week was no exception as the bewitching Linzi Hateley made her debut at the Soho venue, writes Nicky Sweetland.

Hateley has enjoyed an enviable career in musical theatre which started at the tender age of 17 when she was chosen to play the title role in the musical *Carrie*.

The part lead to the teenager making her Broadway debut and although the musical was a flop, it put the performer on a path to success, with experience in all of the ups and downs of the entertainment industry on the way.

Her cabaret show at the Crazy Coqs painted an intimate portrait of her years in the business, with

some touching and hilarious anecdotes alongside some fabulously heart-wrenching renditions of well-known theatre standards.

After a short collection of ditties including bits of Cyndi Lauper's *True Colours* and *The Girl I Mean To Be* from *The Secret Garden*, Hateley talked of the loneliness and trauma she felt at such a young age being thousands of miles from her family and facing the harsh criticism which goes hand in hand with a failing show.

This lead beautifully into a medley of *Out Here On My Own* and the *Les Miserables* classic *On My Own*, which is sung in the show by the street urchin Eponine, a role Linzi played when she was just 18.

Possibly her most famous stage role came a few years later when she was cast as the narrator opposite Jason Donovan in the revival of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat* at

the London Palladium. Joseph was the first West End show I had ever watched as a teenager so when MD for the evening Marcus Savage struck up the first chords of the prologue for Linzi to perform, I couldn't help but get a tingle of anticipation.

Hateley has the ability to reduce the audience to tears with just one look, so expressive is her face, and with a melancholic mix of songs that's just what she did.

The atmosphere became even more sentimental when the singer was joined on stage by her teenage daughter for a lovely rendition of the Beatles' *Here Comes The Sun*.

That wasn't the only guest appearance of the evening as Katie Brayben, fresh from playing Carole King in the hit West End musical *Beautiful*, teamed up with Hateley for a storming version of *You've Got A Friend*.

The show's residency was completely sold out at the club, which is nestled underneath the Brasserie Zedel just off Piccadilly Circus, with Hateley joined later in the week by former *Les Miserables* colleague Lisa Hull and *Chicago* co-star Tiffany Graves.

She is undoubtedly fast becoming a legend in the world of West End theatre and I'm quite sure this won't be the last time we see Linzi Hateley at the Crazy Coqs.



■ **THE VOICE:** Linzi Hateley, pictured here in Barnum with Brian Conley

Stars enlist for the War of the Worlds

FULL casting has been announced for the new production of *War Of The Worlds*, which opens next month at the Dominion Theatre.

Making his West End debut singer-songwriter, actor, musician, and writer Jimmy Nail plays Parson Nathaniel.

Also making his debut will be Daniel Bedingfield as The Artilleryman. The New Zealand born, British raised singer-songwriter shot to stardom in 2001. He returns to this country from LA for the first time in many years.

The third cast member to make their West End debut is Heidi Range, playing Beth. Heidi is the longest serving member of the BRIT award winning multi-platinum-selling British girl group Sugababes.

Alongside these debutants are two West End regulars: Michael Praed, as George Herbert, whose first major appearance was at Theatre Royal Drury Lane in Joseph Papp's

production of *The Pirates of Penzance*, and who has since regularly starred in on Broadway and in the West End; and joining him, Madalena Alberto, playing Carrie, fresh from her triumph as Eva Peron in *Evita* at The Dominion last year.

Finally, as *The Voice Of Humanity*, and completing possibly the starriest cast the West End has seen, is David Essex. One of the original contributors to *Jeff Wayne's Musical Version of The War of The Worlds* in 1978, this will be the first time the two men have joined together to work on *The War of The Worlds* since.

Reimagined and brought to spectacular theatrical life for its world stage premiere, this breathtaking new production, produced by Bill Kenwright, will preview at the Dominion Theatre from Monday, February 8.

For more details visit the website dominiotheatre.com

Festival will be treat for jazz lovers

THE Pheasantry in the King's Road will play host to a range of leading musicians next month with the highly anticipated February Festival.

This top class music venue will be graced by some of the finest names in jazz music, including Elaine Delmar, Joanna Eden, Tina May, Chris Ingham, Georgia Mancio and Sue Richardson.

The music of George Gershwin and Cole Porter could fill every night of the festival without repetition such is the volume of well-known material. Delmar is the most expert interpreter of their writing. She has long been established as a singer of the very highest calibre – with the voice, looks and personality that have captivated worldwide audiences.

Richardson presents the most famous standards, compositions and works inspired by the life of Chet Baker, a unique and influential musician in the 1950s and three subsequent decades, as well as performing songs associated with him. Too Cool is a most entertaining show that has delighted audiences across the UK.

For those who enjoy their music with a Latin flavour, Mancio, with her new trio, have loads of excitement for you to enjoy. Quadro ('picture' in Italian) is the new trio by the award-winning vocalist and much lauded pianist Frank Harrison and bassist Andy Cleyndert. Together they present jazz and Brazilian standards alongside reinvented classical repertoire by composers including Strayhorn/ Ellington, Tom Jobim, Heitor Villa-Lobos and Artie Shaw among others.

Eden, not only a wonderful singer but also Sam Smith's vocal coach, will thrill you with her performance of the wonderful music of another iconic singer and writer, Joni Mitchell.

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The February Festival runs from the February 8 to 13. For more details and to book tickets, visit the website pizzaxpresslive.com



■ **LATIN:** Georgia Mancio

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Ellis and May back on tour

WEST End star Kerry Ellis and rock legend Brian May kicked off their new tour last week at The Pheasantry on Chelsea's King's Road.

The pair, pictured, who have collaborated on a number of projects over recent years, including the acclaimed Candlelight concerts, premiered their *One Voice* show which they will be taking around Europe over the next few months.

The duo also played at the Leicester Square Theatre, where they were special guests of the celebrated singer-songwriter Russ Ballard.

Ellis said: "It was nice for us to get back into it really. We'd done a couple of performances late last year but to actually do a full gig was lovely and it was nice to have a pre-tour get-together for us. It went great, the crowd was lovely, really responsive."

Kerry Ellis is best known for her West End stage roles, which have included playing the green witch in the smash hit musical *Wicked* and more recently Grizabella in *Cats* at the London Palladium. With a beautiful voice, Kerry has legions of devoted fans of both her solo work and of the work on which she has collaborated with Queen guitarist May.

From the pub direct to Royal Albert Hall

VOCAL harmony group Collabro shot to stardom after winning *Britain's Got Talent* in 2014, and following huge success with a number one album and a sell-out UK tour, the group who only formed weeks before the initial audition are looking forward to another busy year.

Their second album, aptly titled *Act Two*, was pipped to the number one spot by Florence and the Machine back in June but with legions of so-called Collaborators following their every move, their upcoming UK tour looks to be a sure-fire hit, writes Nicky Sweetland.



■ **MARCHING ON:** Collabro are heading for the Albert Hall

The first UK tour took the group to venues all over the country and also included a gig at the iconic London Palladium.

However, it was the concert in Brighton which was an extra special occasion for Richard.

He said: "The highlight for me was going back to my hometown. Only a year before that I was busking just up the street and then I'm performing at the Brighton Centre in front of 3,000 people. It was completely mad and I actually started tearing up on stage. It was a real moment for me."

This year Collabro will once again take their show across the pond with an East Coast tour of the US.

They've also got a large and devoted fan base in Japan but

it's here in London that the band will achieve a career high later this year when they play one of the most revered venues in the world, the Royal Albert Hall.

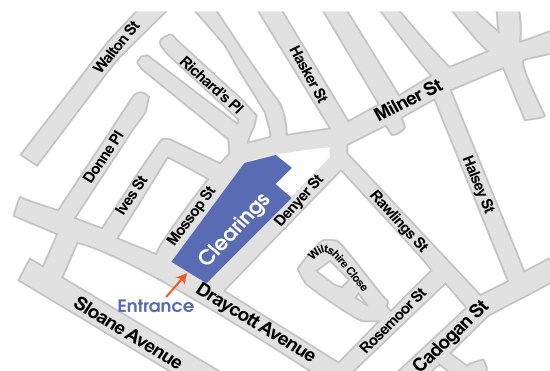
Richard said: "It's unreal. With the first tour we played the Palladium and now we're stepping up again and performing at the Royal Albert Hall. I don't know really what it will feel like until we're there."

"I don't think anything I can think will beat the feeling when we're on that stage in front of all those Collaborators just singing those songs that everyone knows and loves."

Collabro will be performing at the Royal Albert Hall on the March 26. For more details visit their website collabroglobal.com

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Public exhibition on the redevelopment of the Clearings building, Draycott Avenue, SW3



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Local Planning Applications London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990

I give notice that applications have been made to the Council of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham as follows:

FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH MAY AFFECT THE CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF A LISTED BUILDING OR CONSERVATION AREA

121 - 140 Hamlet Gardens London W6 0TR **2015/06098/FUL**

Replacement of existing windows and terrace doors with new doors and windows; erection of new metal railings and gates to main entrances and increasing the height of existing balcony railings at first, second and third floor levels at the front of the building; erection of a single storey bicycle shed at the rear of the building.

William Morris Sixth Form And Former St Dunstan's Clinic St Dunstan's Road London W6 8RB **2016/00139/VAR**

Variation of condition 10 of planning permission ref: 2015/00321/FR3 granted 1st April 2015 to allow the cycle storage to be relocated outside of the approved site plan as indicated in drawing no. P018-A-DR-(WS)-100.

Fulham Football Club Stevenage Road London SW6 6HH **2016/00112/FUL**

Partial demolition and alteration of the existing Putney Stand to provide new ancillary facilities, improved spectators access/egress and circulation, new improved wheelchair user positions and provision of 2 no. off street parking spaces (Revision of condition of new access route to Bishops Park, in connection with the extended Riverside Stand approved under planning permission reference: 2012/00038/FUL.

23 Queensmill Road London SW6 6JP **2016/00172/FUL**

Erection of an additional floor at roof level; erection of a rear extension at second floor level, on top of existing back addition.

91 - 93 King Street London W6 9XB **2016/00173/ADV**

Replacement of two internally illuminated fascia signs; display of an internally illuminated projecting sign.

15 Ackmer Road London SW6 4AP **2015/06006/FUL**

Erection of a single storey rear extension, to the side of the existing back addition, including the installation of building doors on the rear elevation at ground floor level; excavation of the front garden and part of the rear garden to form lightwells, in connection with the enlargement of the existing basement. (Amended Description).

78 Henchman Street London W12 0BN **2016/00133/FUL**

Replacement of all existing timber single glazed sliding sash windows, casement windows and doors to front and rear elevations with new double glazed timber sliding sash; casement windows and doors.

The William Morris 2 - 4 King Street London W6 0QA **2016/00080/VAR**

Variation of condition 2 of planning permission ref: 2014/04206/FUL granted 19th November 2014 to allow an increase in the height of the building fronting King Street elevation.

Flat First And Second Floors 3 Tournay Road London SW6 7UG **2016/00093/FUL**

Erection of a rear roof extension, involving an increase in the ridge height by 300mm; erection of glass screening around the flat roof at third floor level for use as a terrace in connection with the conversion of first and second floor maisonette to use as two self-contained flats.

158 - 262 Uxbridge Road London W12 7JA **2016/00106/FUL**

Installation of a fixed awning to the front elevation to replace existing retractable awning.

Hand And Flower 617 King's Road London SW6 2ES **2015/05823/ADV**

Display of an externally illuminated shroud advertisement onto the existing scaffold in front of The Hand And Flower, 617 King's Road for a temporary period of 12 months

642 - 646 King's Road London SW6 2DU **2015/05822/ADV**

Display of an externally illuminated shroud advertisement onto the existing scaffold in front of 642 - 646 King's Road for a temporary period of 12 months.

9 Steeple Close London SW6 3LE **2016/00033/FUL**

Erection of a rear extension at second floor level, on top of the existing back addition following the removal of existing roof terrace; formation of a balcony at second floor level to the rear elevation; installation of 2no rooflights in the rear roofspace.

18 Bradbourne Street London SW6 3TE **2016/00126/FUL**

Retention of installation of a Juliet balcony with glass balustrade at first floor level to the rear elevation.

8 Parthenia Road London SW6 4BD **2016/00128/FUL**

Erection of a front roof extension; raising part of the roof of second floor rear back addition.

42 Mellitus Street London W12 0AS **2016/00144/FUL**

Replacement of existing timber and uPVC glazed sliding sash, casement windows and doors with new double glazed timber sliding sash, casement windows and doors.

615 Fulham Road London SW6 5UQ **2016/00158/FUL**

Erection of an additional floor at roof level; alterations to the flat roof of single storey back addition to form a pitch roof with new glazing.

22 Langthorne Street London SW6 6JY **2016/00171/FUL**

Erection of a rear extension at second floor level over part of the existing back addition; excavation of the front, rear and side gardens to form lightwells in connection with the creation of a new basement.

Flat Basement And Ground Floors 57 Gunterstone Road London W14 9BS **2015/04741/FUL**

Erection of rear extensions at upper ground and lower ground floor level; alterations to the rear fenestration at lower ground and upper ground floor level; enlargement of the existing terrace including the erection of new railings at upper ground floor level to the rear elevation; erection of new external steps from lower ground floor to garden level and extending the party wall at the rear of the property; installation of a new door to the side of single storey extension at lower ground floor level to the front of the property (Revision of condition of new access route to Bishops Park, in connection with the extended Riverside Stand approved under planning permission reference: 2012/00038/FUL.

Public Notices

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CONDITIONS OF ACCEPTANCE FOR ALL ADVERTISEMENTS

Orders are accepted by the Publishers subject to the Standard Conditions agreed between the Newspaper Society and the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising. Save that:

- Advertisements are accepted on the conditions that (a) descriptions relating to goods are accurate and in no way contravene the provisions of the Trade Descriptions Act 1968, and the Fair Trading Act 1973, and (b) the copy complies with the British Code of Advertising Practice. Advertisements offering credit or hire facilities must conform to the Consumer Credit (Advertisements) Regulations 1980.
- 'Classified' Advertisers offering goods or service of a business, commercial or trade nature will, at the discretion of the Publishers, be deemed 'Trade Advertisers', and as such, must include their names in advertisements. A telephone number is an optional addition to these requirements and not an alternative.
- To comply with the Business Advertisements (Disclosure) Order 1977, Trade Advertisers must make it clear that they are selling goods in the course of business either by content, format, size or place of the advertisement or by including words such as 'trade', 'dealer', 'agent', 'wholesaler', '(T)' etc. in the advertisement.
- The Publishers accept no liability whatsoever for any loss or damage however caused arising out of:
 - Any error, inaccuracy or omission in the printing or publishing of any advertisement;
 - Any failure to publish an advertisement on the day / date or day / dates specified by the advertiser; or
 - Any delay in forwarding or omission to forward replies to box numbers to the Advertiser.
- The Publishers will endeavour to publish advertisements on the day / date or day / dates specified by the Advertiser but insertion days / dates cannot be guaranteed.
- Where shrinkage of advertisement occurs for whatever reasons the advertisement will be charged to the nearest full centimetre. This will NOT apply to the full-page advertisements, which remain full pages even after shrinkage.
- The Publishers reserve the right to reject an advertisement or to vary it in any way they deem fit, at any time before publication, whether or not the advertisement has already been accepted for publication.
- Whilst every effort is made to minimise errors in advertisements, mistakes do sometimes occur. Advertisers or their agents should therefore check their advertisements and inform us of any errors immediately. Responsibility cannot be accepted for more than one incorrect insertion. Typographical or minor changes, which do not affect the value of the advertisement, do not qualify for republication or allowances.
- All gross advertising rates (except classified lineage and semi-display) are subject to and include a 0.1% Advertising Standards Board of Finance surcharge, payable by the advertisers to help finance the self-regulatory control system administered by the Advertising Standards Authority.
- All rates quoted are subject to VAT at the rate currently in force at the time the advertisement appears.
- Should the rate for advertisements be altered the price for remaining insertions shall be revised accordingly or the publishers shall have the right to cancel the unexpired portion of the order.
- The placing of an advertisement order will be deemed an acceptance of these conditions.
- Account facilities are granted at the discretion of the Company.
- All accounts must be settled within the terms agreed by the Company and the Customer.
 - Should an advertiser be in breach of the agreed terms, the publisher shall be entitled to levy a 10% surcharge on the value of the whole debt in respect of accounts with terms of less than 30 days, and any discounts or commissions that had been allowed will be reclaimed.
 - Regular monthly accounts that are in breach of the agreed terms will pay an interest rate of 6% above the current bank of England base rate for each month that the account is overdue and discounts or commissions that had been allowed will be reclaimed. Should legal action be required the interest will be charged in accordance with the County Court Act 1984.
- Where an advertiser instructs / appoints an advertising agent to act on their behalf, the advertiser will remain jointly and severally liable for payment in respect for an advertisement(s) should the appointed agent fail to pay. For the avoidance of doubt, the agent acts for the advertiser and not for the publisher with the agent being responsible for notifying the advertiser of this liability.
- All queries must be notified, preferably in writing to the accounts department of the publisher within 7 days of the invoice date.
- All digital services are maintained in partnership with the publishers' hosting service providers. Every effort is made to ensure the continuity of these services, but some occasional technical downtime beyond the publishers control may occur. The publisher and its associated companies shall be under no liability if the production and distribution of web services is delayed or prevented by any cause beyond the control of the publisher.
- The Publisher may provide voucher copies for published advertisements in electronic form only subject to certain criteria. Further information is available on request.
- The copyright of advertisements produced wholly or partially by the Publishers belong to the Publishers. Advertisers may not reproduce such advertisements without the Publishers' consent.

Box Numbers

Boxes are open for the receipt of bona fide answers and are not available for distribution of trade canvassing matter. Original testimonials, goods, cash, cash stamps or payments of any kind must not be enclosed. A box Number and postal address are charged as part of the advertisement, i.e. Box No., centre address. There is no charge for forwarding replies.

Box numbers alone are not available for use in 'Trade' advertisements, other than Employment and Business Opportunities.

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All advertising must contain the name of the advertiser, phone number alone are not permitted.

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The service you have requested may require us to carry out a credit search at a credit-referencing agency, which will record the fact that a search has been made. We may need to share your information with other lenders and credit reference agencies. However, we will only use the information from these searches to make credit-granting decisions and, if necessary, for fraud prevention or tracing debtors.

Data controller will use your information for administration and analysis. We may share your information with other Tindle Group Newspaper companies or carefully selected third parties. We, or they, may send you details of other goods and services, which may be of interest to you. The information may be provided by letter, telephone or other reasonable means of communication. Calls may be recorded or monitored for training purposes.

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LONDON WEEKLY NEWS

sport

Washington tipped to deliver the goods

FORMER postman Conor Washington is the young striker Queens Park Rangers manager Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink hopes will deliver the goods following the sale of Charlie Austin to Southampton.

The 23-year-old Washington arrived in W12 last week from Peterborough United on a three-and-a-half year deal after Rangers agreed an undisclosed fee – thought to be around £2.8m – with the League One club.

Washington has scored 15 goals for Posh this season, including 14 in his last 19, and made his R's debut as a late substitute in Saturday's home 1-1 draw with Wolverhampton Wanderers.

On his first signing as QPR boss, Hasselbaink said: "Conor is a player I've admired for a while now, so I'm delighted he's agreed to join us. "I've seen at first-hand what he's capable of and his all round game has always impressed me. Of course, he's still got a lot to learn, he's by no means the finished article, but I am convinced he has what it takes to succeed at a higher level with us.

"He's raw, he's hungry, he's determined. He's quick and he's versatile, which is important. He can play on his own up there, in a two, or on the shoulder of another striker. He's got great pace to get in behind and that's something we need when you look at our current attacking options.

"Importantly, he's got the right mentality to be a QPR player."

Washington, who has taken over Austin's No.9 shirt, has an impressive goalscoring pedigree. During a two-year spell with St Ives in the Southern League, he amassed an incredible 64 goals in just 60 games.

As Washington has moved through the leagues, his goal-scoring ratio has consistently

improved. From one in 16 in his first season as a pro, to an average of one in four in his second, and almost one in three during his third campaign, Washington is now in the form of his career, averaging almost a goal every other game.

Massive pull

He enthused: "As a striker, having someone like Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink here as manager was a massive pull for me. He's been there, seen it and done it at the very highest level and that can only benefit me as a player.

"I feel I've improved as a player over the last 18 months. My mentality has changed and I'm a better player for it. But I also feel there's a lot more to come from me and I believe I can properly go on to fulfil my potential at QPR.

"I know I've still got a long way to go in my development but I'm relishing the chance to prove my worth. I've proved I can do it at every level I've played at so far, so I don't see any reason why I can't do it here with QPR."

Washington will give QPR another option in attack, where summer signing Sebastian Polter is staking his claim for a prolonged run in the side. The 24-year-old German gave Rangers a second minute lead with a powerful header against Wolves – his fourth goal in five matches.

"Seb reminds me of an old fashioned English striker," said Hasselbaink. "He's got the tools to become a very good player but he's still learning.

"His hard work is being rewarded at the moment and he deserves this because he is giving

everything for the team.

"It's not just hard work, though – he is leading the line with a lot of ability.

"Seb will only get better by being stronger and fitter. It's a process for him because he still hasn't had many games."

Polter played the lone striker role until he was joined up front by Washington, who came on to replace Junior Hoilett with seven minutes of normal time remaining.

Even in such limited time, Washington showed his quality. After controlling a long ball with a neat first touch, he got near to the byeline and delivered a perfect low cross on a plate for Tjaronn Chery but his crisp strike rebounded from the post. It was a golden chance for R's to snatch all three points after James Henry had equalised with a lucky twice deflected effort in the 47th minute.

"I'd have backed Chery every day of the week on his left foot," said Hasselbaink, still awaiting his first home win since taking charge in early December. "Maybe he caught it too well. Sometimes if you scuff those you go in.

"The first half was very positive. We were organised and solid. We were on the front foot and our forward play was good.

"But we dropped off in the second half and didn't get behind them enough."

Henry's fortunate equaliser was a cruel blow to Hasselbaink's men and the R's gaffer



LOFTUS ROAD RANGERS REVIEW With Tony McDonald

added: "The goal was disappointing. It's a double deflection.

"Could we have got a bit closer before he shot? Maybe. But I can't be too critical. It was a fluke of a goal. "You can't train against those types of goals. It's a double deflection and they're rare. They don't happen every week."

With no game this weekend (Saturday's scheduled visit to Nottingham Forest was brought forward to Tuesday of this week, just after LWN went to press), Hasselbaink has an 11-day break between matches to work with his team before Ipswich Town visit Loftus Road on Saturday week (Feb 6).

HASSELBAINK is also delighted to have completed the signing of goalkeeper Matt Ingram from Wycombe Wanderers for an undisclosed fee.

The 22-year-old, who made 140 appearances in all competitions for the League Two side since making his debut in March 2013, has signed a four-and-a-half year deal until the summer of 2020.

Widely regarded as the best young keeper in the fourth tier, Ingram is relishing the opportunity to prove his worth at a higher

level with Rangers.

He said: "I'm at the stage of my career when I want to progress and I see QPR as a natural step forward for me.

"I spoke to the manager at length and he made me feel really welcome about coming here.

"I'm by no means the finished article – as a 22-year-old goalkeeper, I've still got a lot to learn – and coming here gives me another platform to develop and get better.

"The challenge of competing for the shirt will drive me on. Alex (Smithies) is a great keeper and I'm looking forward to working with him and the other keepers."

The future

Hasselbaink said: "Matt is one for the future but he's joining us at a time when he's developing into a really good young goalkeeper.

"Alex has the shirt now but I want Matt to challenge him – and that is why we have signed him. Knowing him and his character, he won't just be coming here to sit on the bench.

"We feel Matt will play at the highest level one day. We foresee a very bright future for him."

■ CHELSEA from back page

the winning goal in the Europa Cup final in 2013 against Benfica.

Including Sunday's win over Arsenal, Ivanovic has had 342 outings for the Blues and, handily for a defender, has scored 32 times.

Speaking after the 1-0 victory, he said that it was the best result since Hiddink has taken the helm.

"It was a very important win and one that we deserved," he said. "The key point was the team spirit and we can be happy with the three points.

"We started the game really well, we controlled it until the red card and when we scored, we wanted to get another. We haven't just played well against Arsenal, we have played well in the last few weeks but in those games we didn't get the results we deserved. This win compensates for that and we can be happy."

Echoing his manager's views that Fabregas and Costa have got their mojo back, Ivanovic said of the Spanish pair: "The first thing to say is we have had more time to work, we have had a week between games and we have been working very hard. We have improved our physical condition and the result of that is showing on the pitch.

"Cesc and Diego are playing really well. When these kind of guys attack, with the special things they both have, we get results.

"Against Arsenal and in the last few matches, they have given a lot for the team. It's always the guys in attack that make the difference.

"For us it's very important for Diego to score, for Cesc to assist with great passes, because it gives a lot for the team."

So can Blues start thinking about silverware rather than relegation?

"Yes, but we have to be careful, because every time we play this kind of game where we are afraid to lose, we are very focused and get something positive.

"But when we relax, when we play at



■ BRANISLAV Ivanovic has signed a new one-year deal at Chelsea

home . . . all this season we have gone one step forward, then two back. Maybe this will be the turning point but it depends on the next match.

"We have to be really careful, we have to get the points from every game. We need to start winning games regularly. We don't know where we can finish but we are not thinking about that because we know the season for us has been very, very disappointing. It's not finished and that's a positive, because we can still change something."

■ FA Youth Cup holders Chelsea Under-18s thrashed Manchester United 5-1 away in the fourth round of the competition.

They now face a trip to west London neighbours AFC Wimbledon after strikes from Ike Ugbo, ex-Pimlico Academy student Tammy Abraham, Mason Mount, Jay Dasilva and Mukhtar Ali.

■ FULHAM from back page

There is a sense that, at 29, McCormack sees this as probably his last chance to play in the Premier League – assuming Middlesbrough do gain promotion in May.

He would certainly be a huge loss – and not just for his goals.

McCormack, who joined Fulham from Leeds United for £11m on a four-year deal in July 2014, also has one of the best assists records in English football this season.

Dead-ball specialist

He is a dead-ball specialist whose creativity is distinctly lacking in a Middlesbrough side renowned for a string of low scoring victories in games of few chances.

While Fulham fans continue to bite their nails as the clock ticks agonisingly towards next Monday's deadline, Jokanović must use what is left of this transfer window to bring in loan signings. After the defeat by Hull, which leaves his side four points above the bottom three, he said: "It's not an easy situation for us. I made three changes but we're looking to the loan market.

"Our plan is to bring in new people. We have another week and we're trying to do something. We need to improve."

Fulham enjoyed 67 per cent of the play against Steve Bruce's side but Tigers' keeper Allan McGregor was only forced into a couple of saves,

although Jamie O'Hara went close from a free-kick at the Hammersmith End and in another close shave Alex Kačanić almost scrambled the ball over the line.

There were just 10 minutes remaining when Lasse Vigen Christensen's reckless challenge on Moses Odubajo handed Hull the penalty that decided the game.

Jokanović said: "First of all we're very disappointed. I believe we played very well for 60-65 minutes and had a lot of possession. It's true, we didn't create many chances but it was clear the game was heading for a draw, then we made one mistake and lost."

At least the Serbian didn't point an accusing finger at the match officials, as many other managers do in the face of adversity. He said: "I don't know if it was intentional but I believe the referee made the right call," he admitted.

"I try to organise my team," added Jokanović. "Hull are one of the top teams in the Championship – they are more solid, stronger and faster. I tried to find a way to win the game. I don't think we're ready to play in a similar way to Hull but I didn't see a big difference between us and them.

"We showed some organisation, we had more balance but it's the second game I've lost at home."



■ CONOR Washington on his QPR debut Pic: Rob Newell/Digital South

FOOTBALL FIXTURES

Sunday, January 31

Milton Keynes Dons v CHELSEA, (FA Cup 4th round), 4.00

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Watford v CHELSEA, 7.45

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Blues target cup progress

CHELSEA can put their misfiring Premier League season on hold this week as they prepare to visit Milton Keynes Dons on Sunday, in the fourth round of the FA Cup.

It's unlikely that interim manager Guus Hiddink will unnecessarily tinker with the side that dispatched Arsenal so professionally on Sunday, but a few enforced changes are on the cards.

Returning to the starting line-up, following his groin injury sustained against Crystal Palace three weeks ago, will be Eden Hazard, who came on as a substitute in the 1-0 win at The Emirates.

England vice-captain Gary Cahill, who it seems has lost the battle with John Terry to partner Kurt Zouma in the league, is expected to take Terry's place in the back four against the side currently 20th in the Championship.

Pedro, who apparently had a stomach complaint at the weekend, will most likely play instead of rested Oscar.

Up front, Diego Costa is a doubt. He had a shin

● By LWN reporter **Paul Lagan**
sport@londonweeklynews.co.uk

problem before the Arsenal game and though he scored the winner after 23 minutes, he limped off The Emirates pitch midway through the second half clutching his right leg. Loic Remy is the obvious alternative.

Hiddink said of the Costa blow: "I don't know if it's a slight or more severe injury. It was on the knee."

The 1-0 win in north London extended Hiddink's unbeaten run to seven matches, ironically the best in the Premier League at present, since he took over from Jose Mourinho.

Languishing

But there have only been two league wins and that's why Blues are still languishing at the wrong end of the table, in 13th place, just seven points clear of third from bottom Newcastle United.

Chelsea are 14 points off fourth spot and while it is

mathematically possible, it's highly improbable that Blues will qualify for next season's Champions League. Of course, if they overcome Paris Saint-Germain next month and go on to lift the trophy in May, then they will be in Europe's elite competition next season as holders.

Although Hiddink is unlikely to be manager next season, he is hoping that his charges keep on winning.

Talking of the three points gained against 10-man Arsenal, the 69-year-old Dutchman said: "It was a spectacular result. I am proud of the guys. We played well in the first half and OK in the second. But we should have scored more goals."

Of the 18th minute incident in the 18th minute, Arsenal centre-back Per Mertesacker was red carded by ref Mark Clattenburg for bringing down Costa, who would have been through on Petr Cech's goal, Hiddink said: "There was no doubt it was a sending-off, because you could see it was a beautiful through pass from Fabregas to Diego."

"But when you wait for Arsenal, they are so skilful and can score against us, so we should have gone forward more. The only thing I can criticise them for



This week at STAMFORD BRIDGE

is that we didn't go for the kill and make it 2-0.

"But I'm pleased with the attitude of the team. We tried to be proactive, not just reactive."

On the superb performance of ex-Gunner Cesc Fabregas, Hiddink said: "He is strategically very strong and with him, we can start playing football."

"I'm happy he is saying he is playing well. He is in a line of improving. He likes it when he can play but we try to get the team in balance."

Chelsea had a strong shout for a penalty dismissed when Laurent Koscielny bashed Fabregas to the ground in the Arsenal penalty area.

Diplomatic as ever, Hiddink said of the obvious spot kick that wasn't given: "I can understand that the referee did not give the penalty."

"We are unbeaten (since I took over as manager) but it's not satisfying. We need three or more wins and if we stay unbeaten as well, it's possible to get into the top four."

"But I want to see the ambition from the players, even when there is nothing at stake. John Terry says we can make the top four. So if the captain says so, then we follow the captain – but it is a gap."

Hiddink has, however, scotched rumours that former striker Didier Drogba would be joining him in the dugout anytime soon.

The former Ivory Coast striker is plying his trade as a player on the other side of the Atlantic, in the MLS with Montreal Impact, and was expected to bring much-needed personality and experience to the Chelsea dressing room as a coach rather than player.

But it seems that negotiations to release him from his remaining year deal have stalled and Drogba, currently doing the rounds promoting his new book, will return to Canada for one season more.

"Drogba won't be coming back to Chelsea in the short-term," said Hiddink. "He'll always be welcome in the long-term."

ONE iconic Chelsea player who is remaining at The Bridge is Branislav Ivanovic, who has signed a new one-year contract.

The centre-back, who plays right-back for Blues, will be 32 next month and Chelsea's policy of giving only one-year deals to players over 30 means the Serbian will now stay in SW6 until at least July 2017.

He said: "I am very happy to stay with Chelsea for another season. After eight years here this is my home and there is no other place I would rather play football."

"I have enjoyed so much success since moving to the club and I am determined to help the team achieve more in the last months of this season and next year as well."

Ivanovic was signed from Locomotive Moscow in January 2008 for £9million. He has won the Champions League and two Premier League titles, three FA Cups and one League Cup. He also scored



■ DIEGO Costa may have to sit out the FA Cup tie at MK Dons Pic: Rob Newell/Digital South



Focus on Craven Cottage

By TONY McDONALD

Whites fear loss of Ross

FULHAM fans are bracing themselves for the loss of their leading scorer and most creative player as Monday's transfer deadline looms large.

Ross McCormack, who has scored 17 goals in 31 matches this season, has been targeted by promotion-chasing Championship rivals Middlesbrough for weeks.

Transfer window

Speculation that Boro will come in with a bid of around £10million for the Scottish international before the transfer window closes at 11pm on Monday increased following their shock home defeat by Nottingham Forest last Saturday which cost the Teesside club top spot.

Ironically, they have been replaced in pole position by Hull City, who left Craven Cottage with a 1-0 victory courtesy of Abel Hernandez's 80th minute penalty.

To add further fuel to the fire, McCormack – who has also been linked to Sheffield Wednesday – was left out by Whites. Fulham publicly declared that their inspirational skipper was unable to play because he was suffering



■ ROSS McCormack would be a big loss

from "illness".

New head coach Slavisa Jokanovic said: "Yesterday he was sick and he had a physical problem from the last game at Huddersfield. He'd made only one training session this week. Physically, he wasn't ready for today's game."

"I know there are rumours and speculation, he's one of the best Championship players, but I don't want to sell anybody."

Despite Jokanovic's attempts to quell mounting speculation, the more cynical Fulham followers believe that the club's star player was left out pending his imminent departure from SW6.

Middlesbrough boss Aitor Karanka was giving nothing away either, when he said: "I don't want to speak about specific players or rumours, I have to think because thankfully we have two weeks now, one in the transfer market, to improve the squad."

"Yes, need to buy players. I needed to do something and I didn't have the right players to do the substitutions I would have liked to do," added Karanka after his team's defeat by Forest.

■ Continued page 27